Severe Maternal Morbidity

What is it?

Severe maternal morbidity (SMM) is a life-threatening or unexpected event that occurs during pregnancy, delivery, or within the first year after delivery that causes short or long-term complications. The CDC has designated 21 indicators of SMM including: shock, sepsis, eclampsia, heart attack, kidney failure, and excessive bleeding. According to NIH, nationally, from 2016 to 2021, the rates of SMM increased by 40%.

What conditions increase a person's risk for severe maternal morbidity?

- Obesity, asthma, heart disease
- Advanced maternal age
- Pregnant with twins or multiples
- Blood pressure issues in pregnancy (preeclampsia)
- Gestational diabetes
- Certain racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds

What are social drivers/determinants of health and how can they impact severe maternal morbidity and other poor pregnancy or infant outcomes?

As much as 80% of health can be impacted outside the healthcare setting. These external factors are called social drivers of health (SDoH) and play a key role in the health of pregnant mothers, families, and babies. Social drivers include: food insecurity, depression/anxiety, stress, unsafe housing, poor access to education and healthcare services, poverty, unemployment, and domestic violence, along with many other socio and environmental indicators.

What is happening in our community?

Severe maternal morbidity rates are high in Sarasota, Manatee, and DeSoto when compared to the Florida average. There are also significant disparities for black women when compared to white women.

(FL Charts, 2023)

SMM REGIONAL DATA
SARASOTA, DESOTO, & MANATEE

23.8 per 1000 deliveries in Florida	29.2 per 1000 deliveries in Sarasota	32.8 per 1000 deliveries in Manatee County	24.4 per 1000 deliveries in DeSoto County
35.6 per 1000 deliveries to Black Floridians	48.9 per 1000 deliveries to Black Sarasota residents	51.0 per 1000 deliveries to Black Manatee residents	38.5 per 1000 deliveries to Black DeSoto residents

How can we all help?

- Community-based and non-profit organizations and providers can screen for social drivers of health and mental health to assess needs that may impact an individual's health and mental health.
- Community-based and non-profit organizations can consider joining Unite Us to screen and refer for social and mental health needs.
- Support or volunteer at organizations that provide health and social services to pregnant women and families.
- Consider joining a First 1,000 Days workgroup to bring your expertise and passion forward.
- Knowledge is powerful! Share this information with friends, neighbors, and staff within your organization.
- If you know of someone who is pregnant and can use assistance navigating services, education, and support during pregnancy, have them fill out an assistance request form through First 1,000 Days at www.first1000dayssuncoast.org/help-form

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