2025 Learning Collaborative

Strengthening Perinatal Health in Northeast Ohio

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#2025BHPLearningCollaborative

Better Health Partnership

Session Objectives

- **Describe best practices advanced in Cradle Cincinnati to reduce infant mortality.**
- **List key barriers of perinatal care in Cuyahoga County.**
- **Identify key priorities to advance through First Year Cleveland.**

Partnership for Change

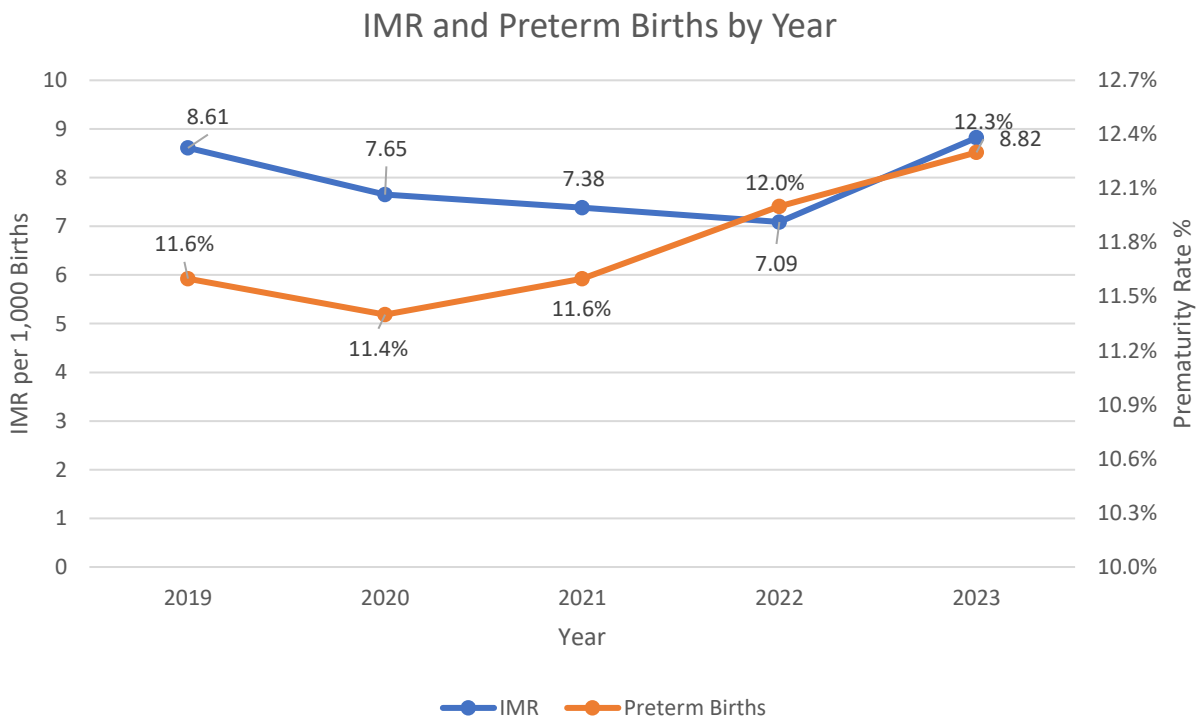
Data Presentation

Infant Mortality in Cuyahoga County

Data sources: Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Cleveland Department of Public Health, and First Year Cleveland

2019-2023

Two Emerging Trends in 2023: Mortality Increasing, Prematurity Climbing



Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births) vs. Prematurity rate (%) from 2019-2023

Key Findings

- 24.4% increase in infant mortality

  After steady progress, infant mortality spiked in 2023

- Steady rise in prematurity

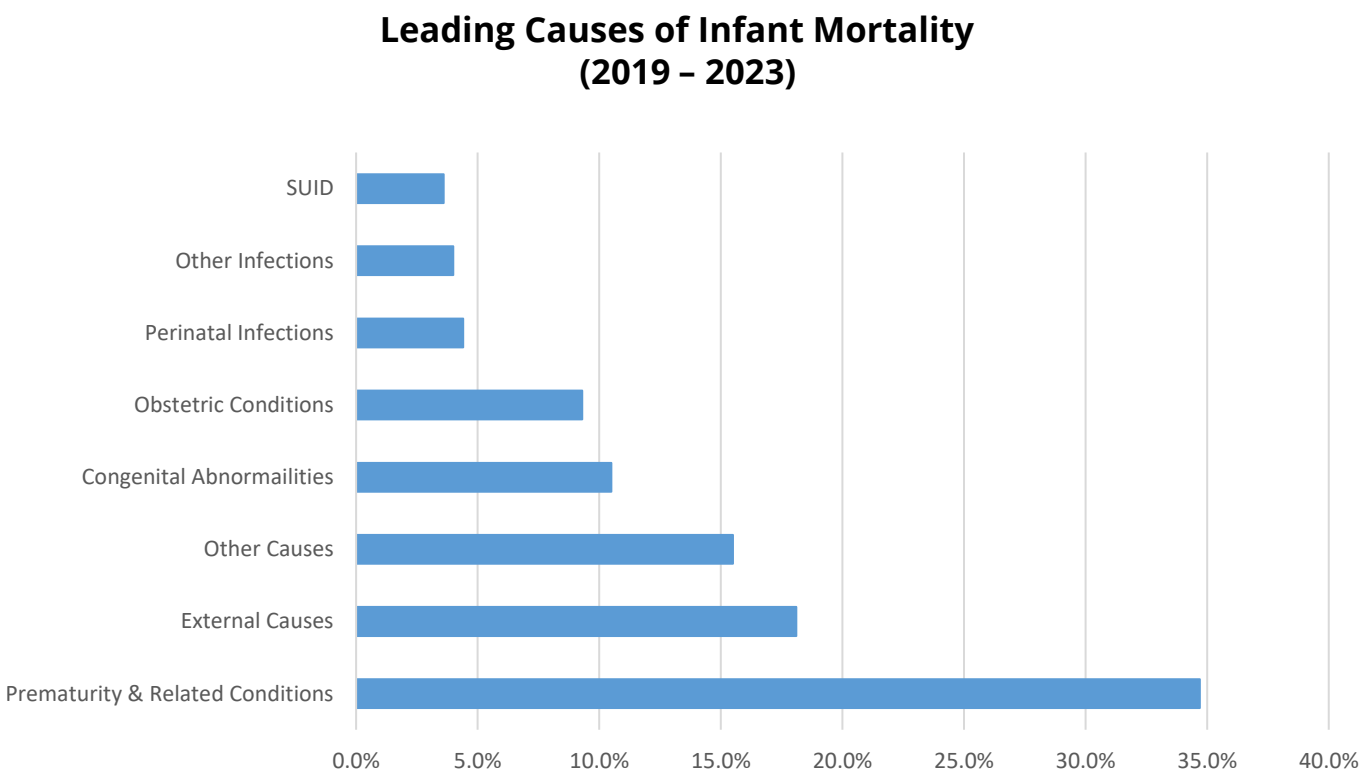
  Both infant mortality and prematurity increased in 2023

- Connected trends emerging

  As prematurity rises, so does infant mortality

"The 2023 data reveals a concerning reversal of previous positive trends. We made real progress from 2019-2022, then lost ground dramatically. What changed?"

The leading cause of mortality: Prematurity and Related Conditions (34.7%)



1 in 3 Infant Deaths

Prematurity and related conditions are responsible for 34.7% of all infant deaths in Cuyahoga County.

Prematurity-Related Causes:

- 24.6% - Short gestation/low birth weight
- 4.0% - Respiratory distress
- 3.2% - Cardiovascular diseases
- 1.2% - Other respiratory diseases
- 1.0% - Birth trauma
- 0.8% - Necrotizing enterocolitis

Preventing prematurity would save more infant lives than any other single intervention. Understanding what causes prematurity is critical to reducing infant mortality.

Data source: Cuyahoga County Board of Health and Child Fatality Review Board Infant COD Breakdown 2019-2023, Ohio Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics

Why Babies Are Born Too Early: The Comprehensive Risk Factors

Obstetric Conditions Risk Factors

Among infant deaths

Incompetent cervix/premature rupture of membranes (4.6%)

Placental problems (previa, separation) (3.4%)

Multiple pregnancy (twins, triplets) (1.4%)

Maternal Health Conditions

Among births

Pre-pregnancy hypertension (7.7% in 2023)

Gestational hypertension (16.5% in 2023)

Pre-pregnancy diabetes (1.8% in 2023)

Gestational diabetes (8.5% in 2023)

Pregnancy Risk Factors

Among births

Smoking during pregnancy (3.2% in 2023)

No prenatal care in first trimester (23.5% in 2023)

Interpregnancy interval under 18 months (32% in 2023)

Why This Matters

Prematurity causes 1 in 3 infant deaths (34.7%) in Cuyahoga County. By addressing these underlying causes, especially hypertension and early prenatal care access, we could significantly reduce infant mortality rates and improve maternal outcomes.

Data source: Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Child Fatality Review Board, Ohio Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics (2019-2023)

Geographic Disparities: Hypertension Clustering in Cuyahoga County

20% **Highest Gestational HTN**
Zip Code 44117 (2019-2023)

9% **Highest Pre-pregnancy HTN**
Zip Code 44112 (appears in both categories)

Hypertension Hotspot Zip Codes:

Gestational HTN:

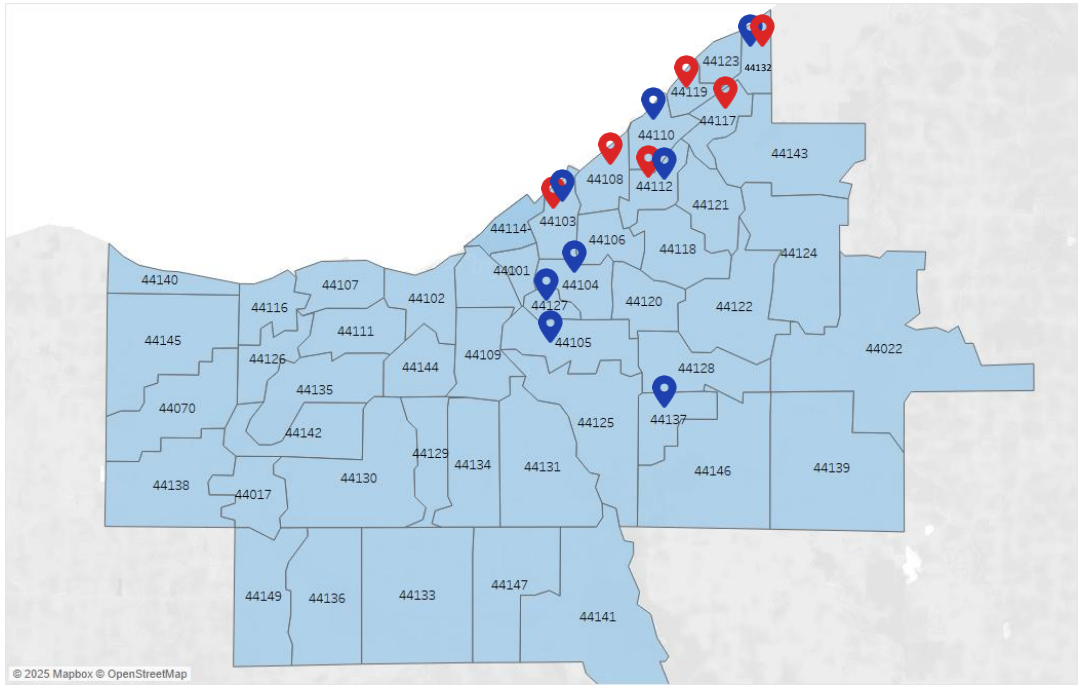
- 44117: 20%
- 44108: 19%
- 44112: 19%
- 44132: 19%
- 44119: 18%
- 44103: 18%

Pre-pregnancy HTN:

- 44112: 9%
- 44137: 8%
- 44105: 8%
- 44127: 8%
- 44110: 8%
- 44132: 8%
- 44104: 8%
- 44103: 8%

Hypertension Concentration

Northeast Cleveland



Why This Matters

Hypertension (both pre-pregnancy and gestational) is concentrated in specific neighborhoods, with Zip Codes 44112, 44132 and 44103 appearing in both high-risk categories. These hotspots correlate with areas of higher prematurity and infant mortality rates. These zip codes are historically redlined and divested in, highlighting the importance of reinvestment and targeted interventions.

Data source: Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Ohio Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics (2019-2023)

Breaking the Cycle: From Crisis to Prevention

After steady progress from 2019-2022, we saw a 24.4% increase in infant mortality in 2023 in Cuyahoga County. We need targeted interventions where prematurity, the leading cause of infant death (34.7% of deaths), and hypertension rates are highest.

Immediate take aways:

Target Hypertension in High-Risk Zip Codes

Focus interventions in zip codes 44117, 44108, 44112, and 44132 where gestational hypertension rates reach 19-20%

Improve First-Trimester Prenatal Care

Nearly 1 in 3 Black mothers (33.9%) receive no first-trimester care, compared to 16.8% of White mothers

Improve Interpregnancy Interval

32% of births have a short interpregnancy interval when the recommendation is 18 months for healing

The Data Story: 2019-2023

2019-2022

IMR down to 7.09

17.7% improvement

2022-2023

IMR up to 8.82

24.4% increase

Prematurity's Impact

34.7% of all infant deaths

Prematurity rate increasing: 11.4% → 12.3% (2020-2023)

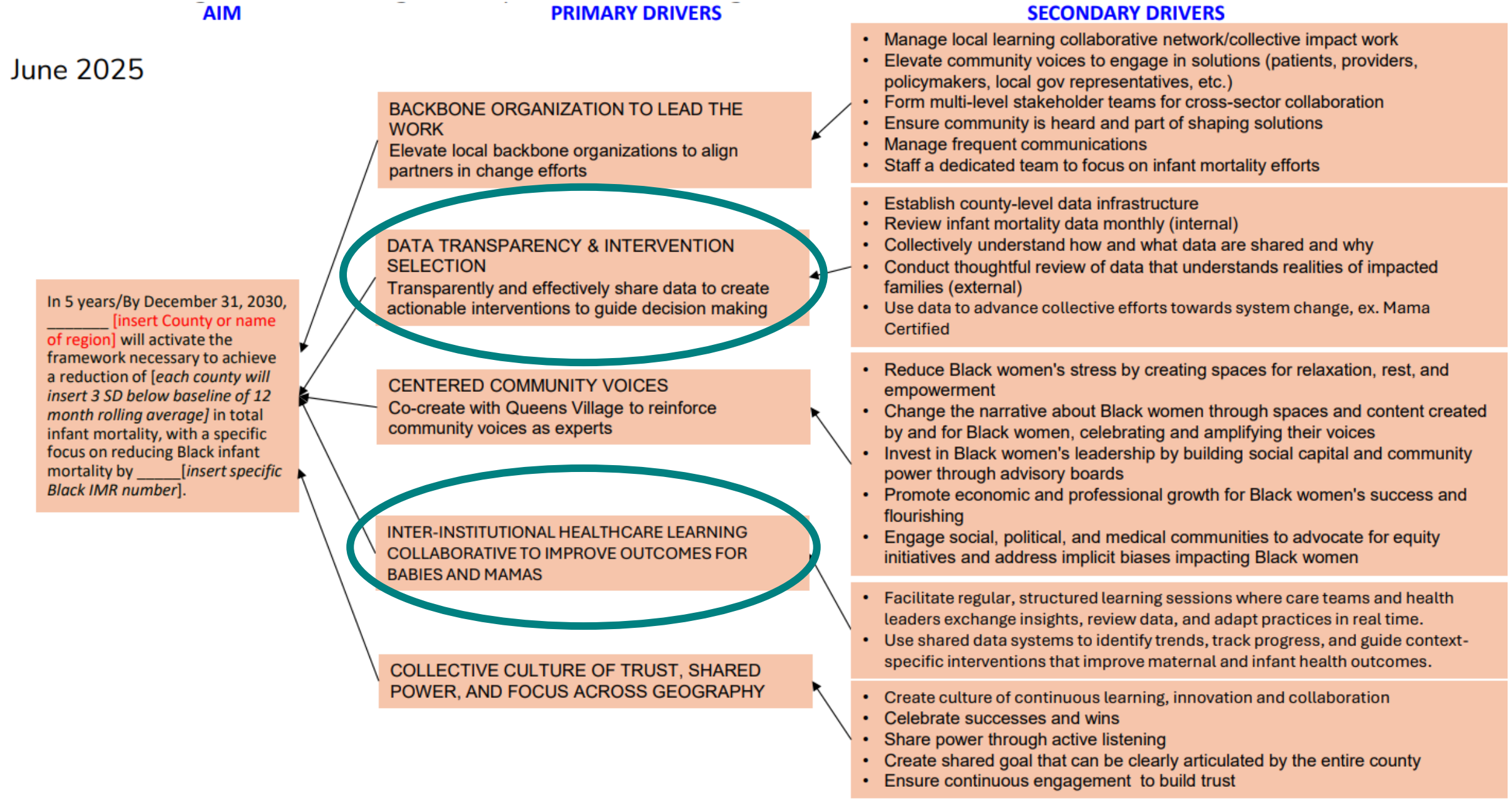
low birth weight: 24.6%

Critical Zip Codes: 44112, 44132, 44103

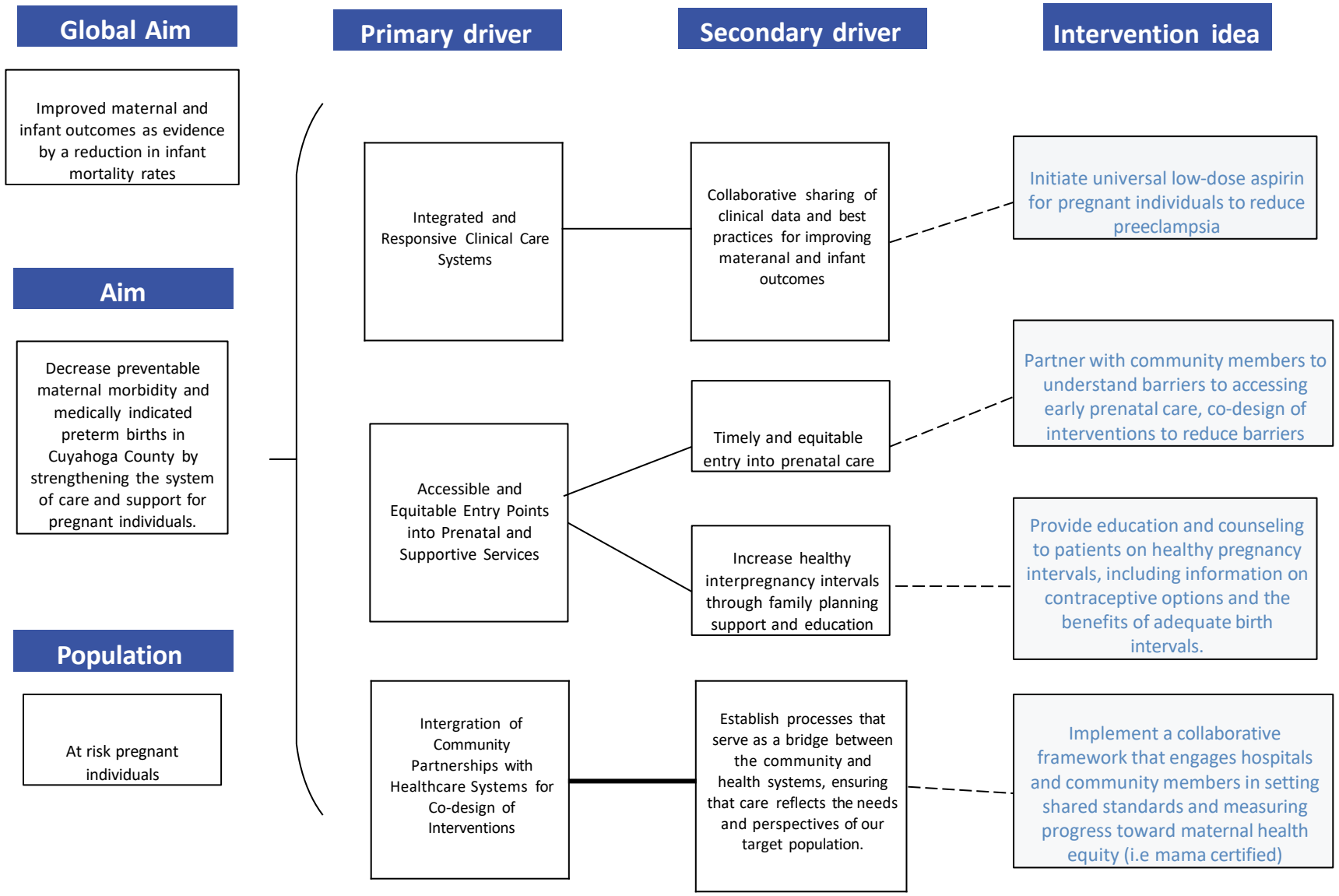
Appears in both pre-pregnancy and gestational hypertension hotspots, requiring targeted intervention

Data source: Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Ohio Department of Health Bureau of Vital Statistics (2019-2023)

Key Driver Diagram: Cradle Cincinnati



Key Driver Diagram: Partnership for Change



Note: Intervention ideas shown are preliminary and subject to refinement or additional input

Designing for Impact: Group Reflection Activity

Prompt	Purpose
1. What's getting in the way of better outcomes in this area?	*Identify root causes and pain points.*
2. What's already working or showing promise (locally or elsewhere)?	*Build on what exists.*
3. What is one idea that could make a real difference in this area?	*Co-create an intervention.*