

The Low Birth Weight Project

MERIDIAN IS COMMITTED TO ERADICATING RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN MATERNITY AND INFANT CARE.

African Americans and Hispanics disproportionately face increased incidences of morbidity and mortality.

To combat this, Meridian is implementing culturally driven solutions to eliminate care gaps for African Americans and Hispanics so as to optimize maternal and infant health outcomes for all. Meridian has prioritized strategic efforts to address this crisis and requests your support.

The Low Birth Weight (LBW) Project is designed to reduce the prevalence of infants born with low birth weight and to prioritize equity in maternity and infant care. Meridian wants to create a diverse network of engaged partners who are committed to eliminating barriers to care and facilitating equitable quality of care for all birthing individuals.

What is the LBW measure?

The LBW measure is defined as the percentage of infants weighing less than 2,500 grams at birth.

Who is most at risk?

The most common causes of LBW are premature births and fetal growth restriction. Recent research shows that pregnant individuals who contracted COVID-19 also have a higher risk of delivering a premature infant.



Additional risk factors for LBW:

- ✓ African Americans are two times more likely to experience high risk pregnancies that result in low birth weight infants.
- ✓ Individuals less than 17 years of age and greater than 40 years of age.
- ✓ Individuals with chronic health conditions.
- ✓ Individuals with “back-to-back” pregnancies.
- ✓ High stress (social determinants of health) and behavioral health issues.
- ✓ Substance use disorders (i.e., smoking, alcohol, drugs).

(continued)

Here's how you can help:

- ✓ Ensure EVERY pregnant individual receives a timely prenatal care visit prior to 13 gestational weeks.
- ✓ Respect and support patients' cultural and personal childbirth preferences.
- ✓ Address maternal smoking, alcohol, and drug use.
- ✓ Complete health equity or implicit bias training.
- ✓ Assess patients for high stress and assess behavioral health at every visit.
- ✓ Regularly refer patients to the Maternal Infant Health Program (MIHP) and to Meridian's Community Health Workers (CHW) to address Social Determinants of Health (SDoH).
- ✓ Discuss contraception and family planning during pregnancy and after delivery.
- ✓ Recommend doula services to all pregnant patients. Doulas offer non-clinical emotional, physical, informational support, and are a covered benefit shown to improve birth outcomes.



Additional resources:

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

To request a Meridian CHW referral, access the Provider Portal at **provider.mimeridian.com** or call Provider Services at **1-888-773-2647**.

DOULA SERVICES

To provide additional emotional, physical, and informational support recommend a doula to all pregnant patients. Medicaid now covers doula services. For more information, including viewing the policy and finding a doula in your area, please visit **michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/maternal-and-infant-health/mdhhs-doula-initiative**.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

To support prenatal and postpartum mental and behavioral well-being, contact MC3 Perinatal at:



Web: **MC3Michigan.org**



Email: **MC3-admin@med.umich.edu**



Phone: **1-844-828-9304**

MATERNAL INFANT HEALTH PROGRAM

To refer patients to a local MIHP, visit **michigan.gov/MIHP** or call **1-833-MI4-MIHP (644-6447)**.