

## **Fatherhood Initiatives**

*Objective 7.2: Increase the number of non-traditional MCH populations participating in Title V-funded initiatives by 10% by 2030*

### **Fatherhood Work Group FAC**

In Year 2, Kansas Title V will continue strengthening and expanding the Fatherhood Work Group within the Family Advisory Council (FAC) through intentional outreach, recruitment, and engagement strategies designed to increase father representation and participation in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) systems. Recognizing that fathers and non-traditional caregivers are often underrepresented in family engagement initiatives, Title V will prioritize efforts to ensure their voices, experiences, and perspectives are meaningfully integrated into program planning, implementation, and evaluation activities.

To support this work, Title V will continue strategic recruitment efforts to broaden FAC membership to include fathers from diverse backgrounds, geographic regions, and lived experiences, including fathers of children and youth with special health care needs, young fathers, rural fathers, and fathers from historically underserved communities. Recruitment efforts will focus on strengthening partnerships with fatherhood-serving organizations and community-based programs across Kansas to increase awareness of the FAC and create pathways for involvement.

Title V will also continue to participate in and engage with statewide fatherhood events, including annual attendance at the Fatherhood Summit, to promote the FAC Fatherhood Work Group, elevate awareness of father engagement initiatives, and foster collaboration among organizations and stakeholders committed to supporting fathers and families. These activities will increase the workgroup's visibility, strengthen community partnerships, and support sustained growth in father participation within Kansas MCH systems.

Through these efforts, Title V aims to build a stronger infrastructure for father engagement, enhance family-centered programming, and ensure fathers are recognized as essential partners in improving maternal, infant, child, and family health outcomes.

### **Fatherhood Focus Groups**

In Year 2, Kansas Title V will continue building upon the strong foundation established through the fatherhood initiative led by a previous intern. During the prior year, significant progress was made in identifying and documenting fatherhood-focused resources and programs across Kansas, including updating and refining a comprehensive statewide map of fatherhood services and supports. This work created an important baseline understanding of the current landscape of fatherhood programming and highlighted opportunities for greater collaboration and engagement.

Building on this initial assessment, Title V will conduct a series of focus groups and stakeholder engagement activities to better understand the experiences, needs,

strengths, and challenges of fathers and organizations serving fathers throughout Kansas. Focus groups will include participation from programs and organizations previously interviewed during the intern-led initiative, as well as fathers representing diverse communities, backgrounds, and lived experiences across the state.

These conversations will provide valuable qualitative insight into barriers to father engagement, gaps in existing services and supports, promising practices, and opportunities to strengthen father-inclusive approaches within maternal and child health systems. Particular attention will be given to understanding the needs of underserved and underrepresented fathers, including rural fathers, fathers of children with special health care needs, young fathers, and fathers from communities disproportionately impacted by health inequities.

Following completion of the focus groups, Title V will analyze findings and use the data to inform future fatherhood strategies, partnership development, and program planning activities. Information gathered through this process will help guide the development of responsive, family-centered initiatives that elevate father involvement and strengthen supports for fathers and families across Kansas.

#### *Fatherhood Resources and Supports*

In Year 2, Kansas Title V will continue exploring innovative approaches to strengthening resources and support systems for fathers throughout the perinatal and early childhood periods. Recognizing that fathers often face barriers to accessing timely information, peer support, and navigation assistance, Title V will assess opportunities to develop more accessible, father-centered communication and support strategies.

As part of this effort, Title V will explore the feasibility of implementing a text-and/or call line specifically designed to support fathers and father figures. This resource would aim to provide fathers with access to information, encouragement, referrals, and connections to available services and supports. Exploration activities may include reviewing existing models, identifying potential partners, assessing technological and operational considerations, and gathering input from fathers on preferred formats, topics, and engagement methods.

This work will help Title V better understand how fathers seek information and support and identify opportunities to create responsive, accessible systems that promote father engagement, strengthen family well-being, and improve maternal and child health outcomes.

#### *Becoming a Mom (BaM) Fatherhood Component*

In Year 2, Kansas Title V will continue efforts to strengthen father engagement within Becoming a Mom (BaM) programs by exploring opportunities to better integrate fathers into program activities, partnerships, and resources. Recognizing the important role fathers and caregivers play in supporting maternal and infant health, Title V will work collaboratively with BaM sites and partners to identify strategies that foster more inclusive and welcoming environments for fathers.

Activities will include exploring mechanisms to better understand current levels of father participation within BaM programming, such as identifying how many fathers are attending sessions or engaging with available resources. Collecting and reviewing this information will help Title V and partner organizations identify barriers to participation, recognize successful engagement strategies, and inform future father-inclusive program enhancements.

During the previous year, Title V collaborated with the FAC Fatherhood Work Group to add a fatherhood resource to the BaM curriculum page, representing an important first step toward expanding father-focused supports within the program. In Year 2, Title V plans to build on this progress by continuing to elevate and integrate father-centered content, resources, and messaging throughout BaM materials and activities.

These efforts will support increased father engagement, strengthen family-centered approaches within BaM programming, and reinforce the role of fathers as key contributors to maternal, infant, and family health and well-being.

### *Dad Doulas*

Kansas Title V will explore opportunities to strengthen father-inclusive support within doula services and related perinatal care initiatives. Recognizing the important role doulas can play in supporting not only birthing individuals but also fathers and caregivers during pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period, Title V will assess current practices and identify opportunities to enhance father engagement within doula models of care.

Activities will include exploring how doulas currently support fathers and caregivers, identifying existing father-focused or “dad doula” training efforts, and gathering information about promising practices already underway in Kansas and nationwide. Title V will engage doulas, doula organizations, and community partners to better understand how father-centered support is currently incorporated into services and identify additional opportunities.

In addition, Title V will explore opportunities for collaboration and partnership with doulas and doula-serving organizations to further examine the feasibility of expanding father-inclusive supports and training efforts. This exploratory work will inform future strategies to strengthen family-centered perinatal care, increase father engagement, and improve support systems for families during the perinatal and early childhood periods.