

## Pennsylvania Maternal Health Collaborative, November 2025

Engaging Fathers  
Throughout The Pre and Post Pregnancy Cycle:  
The Life Course Approach  
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Fatherhood Coordinator



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### About Us



- Healthy Start
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Delaware County Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
- Health Resource Center at Chester High School
- Cribs for Kids
- The Center for Hispanic Resources



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### Life Course Approach



- **Fatherhood Involvement:** the positive and active participation of the father (or partner) in the lives of his children and family during pregnancy and as the children grow up. (Healthy Start Definition)

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### Preconception Health/Social Determinates of Health



- Preconception health refers to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of individuals before they attempt to conceive. It involves taking steps to optimize their health and reduce potential risks for both the mother and child during pregnancy and beyond.

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## Preconception Health/Social Determinates of Health

### Social Determinants of Health



- Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age, that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Conditions (e.g., social, economic, and physical) in these various environments and settings (e.g., school, church, workplace, and neighborhood) have been referred to as "place." Examples: Red Lining/Life Expectancy zip code determined

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## Prenatal Health

- Prenatal health refers to the medical care/doula care received by a pregnant woman during her pregnancy. It encompasses a series of checkups, screenings, and interventions aimed at ensuring the well-being of both the mother and the developing fetus.



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## Postpartum Health



- Postpartum health refers to the physical and emotional well-being of a woman after giving birth. It covers a wide range of aspects, including emotional, **social- relational** and physical health.

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## Postpartum Health: Chestfeeding

- Chestfeeding is a term used to describe the act of feeding an infant from the chest of a lactating parent, regardless of their gender identity. It encompasses all forms of breastfeeding

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## Postpartum Health/Postpartum Depression in Men:

- Postpartum depression (PPD) is a mental health condition that can affect both mothers and fathers after the birth of a child. While it is more commonly associated with mothers, postpartum depression in men, also known as paternal postpartum depression (PPND), is a real and significant issue.



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## Interception Health:



- The interconception period has recently been emphasized by the **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists** and the **National Academies of Medicine** regarding the transition from obstetrical to primary care, and by federal and state efforts to extend Medicaid coverage for the full year after birth.

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- The interconception period is also a critical time for infant health. For infants, their early growth and development contributes to future health, and that growth and development is influenced by parents' health.

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## Interoception Health:



- **Interoception**
- Interoception is the understanding of your body's internal senses. You can feel that you're hungry, that your heart is beating or that you need to pee. It's a learned skill that you develop as you grow. Certain conditions may make it more difficult for you to feel internal senses than others. Mindfulness exercises and therapy may help.

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## Parenting and Child Development Health:

- Parenting significantly influences child development through physical, emotional, cognitive, and social growth by providing a supportive and nurturing environment. Key practices include ensuring proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep, along with engaging in activities like playing, singing, and reading.



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## Sustained Strategic Engagement of Fathers



- **Policy/Programs/Practice Goals**
- Increase the number of fathers and/or partners involved during and after pregnancy
- Increase fathers and/or partners involvement with breastfeeding planning, preparation and support of breastfeeding mothers
- Increase fathers in all pregnancy and postpartum community events, i.e. Parents/Dads Café, Baby Showers

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Father involvement has an impact on both pregnancy and infant outcomes. The term "father involvement" includes fathers, father figures and partners of mothers. The father, father figure or partner can, for example, participate in childbirth classes, prenatal and pediatric medical appointments, and infant care.



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## Father Equity



- History of benign neglect/Maternal and Children Services
- Last funding mandated fatherhood inclusion after 20 years
- Father services to parallel Mother Services
  - Goal Setting
  - Assessment, evaluation, and referrals
  - Resource connection ei. Health, employment, education and training

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## Father Resources



[menshealthnetwork.org](http://menshealthnetwork.org)  
[mantherapy.org](http://mantherapy.org)  
[www.hopkinsmedicine.org](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org)  
[www.nm.org](http://www.nm.org)  
[www.henryford.com](http://www.henryford.com)  
[www.talkspace.com](http://www.talkspace.com)  
[mindjournals.com](http://mindjournals.com)  
<https://blackmenheal.org/>

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