



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Community Programs are Making a Difference in Reducing the Disproportionate Rate of African American Child Deaths

Sacramento, CA – Sacramento County continues to see dramatic results in the community wide effort to reduce African American child deaths. In a recent report compiled by Applied Survey Research (ASR), the results for FY 2019-20 show progress in addressing the longstanding issue of African American children dying at twice the rate of children of other races. The top four causes of the disparity in the preventable child deaths are: perinatal conditions, infant sleep related deaths, child abuse and neglect homicides and third-party homicide.

Summary of the data:

Using Child Death Review Team and Public Health data, the following decreases in the rate of African American child deaths and changes in disparity compared to other races was determined. When comparing 2012-14 to 2016-18, for African Americans in Sacramento County there was a:

- 19% reduction in infant death rate and a 33% reduction in disparity.
- 51% reduction in infant sleep related death rate and a 58% reduction in disparity.
- 88% reduction in the rate for child abuse and neglect homicides for children ages 0-17 and a 95% reduction in disparity.

Read the full report: [Reduction of African American Child Deaths Evaluation Report, FY 2019-20.](#)

“Our community began this critical work with the goal of reducing African American child deaths 10-20% by 2020. Data through 2018 indicate that due to thoughtful, community-led partnerships, programs and interventions, we have hit the lofty mark we set, and in fact when it comes to specific types of child death, we’ve far exceeded our goal” said Phil Serna, Chair of the County Board of Supervisors and First 5 Sacramento Commission. “Now, however, is not the time for complacency, but it is time to double-down and build on the progress we’ve made, especially given the uncertainty the pandemic presents, including the myriad associated increases in violence, mental health needs, and pronounced racial inequities. It is more important than ever to support African American families and invest in the health and safety of our youngest residents, and that’s exactly what I and others will continue to forcefully advocate.”

There are two opportunities to join the virtual presentation:

1. First 5 Sacramento Commission Meeting: December 7th at 12:30 p.m. via ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/91261810294?pwd=SmxYbnlUWThFSGFyeXhvb2JRZEtUZZ09>
Webinar ID: 912 6181 0294 Passcode: 858263, Call in phone 1-669-900-6833
2. Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Meeting: December 8th at 2:45 p.m. Watch live here: <http://metro14live.saccounty.net/>. To make a public comment during the meeting, visit <https://sccob.saccounty.net/Pages/BOSPublicMeetings.aspx> for call-in instructions.

“In a year when the impact of disparities have been made painfully clear, we are heartened by ongoing evidence that community-led and whole-family strategies to reduce the leading causes of African-American child deaths are proving effective. The results of these efforts demonstrate the importance of long-term commitments to preventive supports for families – particularly black families and those from other underserved communities,” said Chet P. Hewitt, president and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and The Center, which manages the Black Child Legacy Campaign, and co-chair of the Steering Committee on Reduction of African American Child Deaths. “We will continue in partnership to push hard for the safety, true equity and support our communities need to lead healthy and meaningful lives.”

BACKGROUND: Tragically, in Sacramento County, for more than the past 20 years, African American children died at two times the rate of other children. In 2011, Supervisor Phil Serna convened the [Blue Ribbon Commission on Disproportionate African American Child Deaths](#) following the [Child Death Review Team report](#) that highlighted the disproportional rates of African American child deaths compared to other children.

First 5 Sacramento has invested more than \$14 million in life saving programs and education campaigns to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant and child mortality. [The Center at Sierra Health Foundation](#) manages the [Steering Committee on RAACD](#) and the [Black Child Legacy Campaign](#) delivering services directly through community hubs. This collective impact effort also includes community organizations, City of Sacramento, multiple community stakeholders, and three Sacramento County departments: Child, Family and Adult Services, Human Assistance and Probation. Child, Family and Adult Services has invested over \$15 million to the effort and has also implemented a Cultural Broker Program to strengthen relationships and improve outcomes for children, youth and families involved with child welfare.

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