UAMS.
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

News Release
Nov. 19, 2024

Media Contacts:
Leslie W. Taylor, 501-686-8998
Wireless phone: 501-951-7260
leslie@uams.edu

David Wise, 479-713-8679
Wireless phone: 501-259-1628
dwise@uams.edu

UAMS Launches Arkansas Maternal Health Scorecard to Improve Maternal Health Outcomes

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Science (UAMS) recently launched an online maternal health scorecard to provide crucial data that could improve the well-being of mothers and babies across the state.

The Arkansas Maternal Health Scorecard is an interactive and user-friendly collection of maternal health data from the Arkansas Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Pregnancy Risk Assessment and Monitoring System (PRAMS), the CDC Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (Wonder) and the Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) Fast Stats website.

The scorecard will be used to inform the public as well as maternal health stakeholders, community organizations and health care providers. Development of the scorecard was supported by a five-year grant to UAMS by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration that established the PRIMROSE Project.

"By increasing the accessibility of maternal health data, the Arkansas Maternal Health Scorecard will raise awareness about the need for stakeholders to work together on improving maternal health in Arkansas," said Jennifer Callaghan-Koru, Ph.D., an associate professor at the UAMS Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health and director of the PRIMROSE Project. Maternal health stakeholders can use the data to plan programs, understand what factors influence data indicators in maternal health and advocate for change.

Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRCs) are part of a national strategy to improve maternal outcomes in the U.S. by generating data on the causes of maternal deaths and developing recommendations to prevent such outcomes. However, getting MMRCs' findings into the hands of providers can prove tricky.

--NEXT--

In a [research letter](#) published earlier this year, Callaghan-Koru and colleagues reported that fewer than one in three labor and delivery staff in Arkansas were aware of MMRC findings.

UAMS researchers with the PRIMROSE Project also assessed [80 maternal health dashboards](#) from various state and local health organizations in the U.S. and found that only two dashboards incorporated data from MMRCs, despite findings that MMRC data can contribute to reducing maternal mortality.

"The data for understanding maternal health in the United States comes from a variety of different sources," said Callaghan-Koru. "Most of the maternal health data sites in other states include data from only one or two sources. The biggest opportunity we saw to improve maternal health data access was to provide a one-stop shop for key indicators from four distinct data sources. We also provide explanations of why the indicators are important, where the data come from and what their limitations are."

Güneş Koru, Ph.D., professor and director of the Office of Public Health Informatics in the UAMS College of Public Health, led the design of the scorecard.

"We systematically collected input from maternal health stakeholders on their needs and challenges, which provided a solid empirical foundation for designing the scorecard," Koru said. "For example, we learned that stakeholders want to be able to visualize changes over time and select which states they use for comparison. These are features of the Arkansas Maternal Health Scorecard that typically aren't present in other maternal health data tools."

Koru presented the team's research with maternal stakeholders at the Annual Symposium of the American Medical Informatics Association last week in San Francisco.

Over the next three years, UAMS researchers plan to expand the scorecard to add new features and more data.

Maternal health care leaders in Arkansas are already seeing the benefits of accessing data through the scorecard.

"The Arkansas Maternal Health Scorecard gives providers, patients or anyone interested in maternal health in Arkansas an easy-to-read, factual account of the needs in Arkansas," said Nirvana Manning, M.D., who heads UAMS' Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. "This new resource will greatly benefit the ongoing collaborative work to improve our state's outcomes for mothers and babies."

The dashboard can be accessed online at https://ar.maternalhealth.us.

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a

statewide network of regional campuses; and eight institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,485 students, 915 medical residents and fellows, and seven dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube or Instagram.

Like us, we're social: