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HPIO brief offers strategies for reducing social drivers of infant mortality in Ohio

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) – The Health Policy Institute of Ohio has released a new policy brief, [Social Drivers of Infant Mortality Recommendations for Action and Accountability in Ohio](#), that builds upon recommendations first included in a report the Institute completed 5 years ago.

“Despite the efforts of many in both the public and private sectors, progress since 2011 has been minimal and uneven, and Ohio’s infant mortality rate remains higher than most other states,” the report concludes.

For many years, policymakers and community leaders across Ohio have worked to reduce high rates of infant mortality. Decisionmakers have explored the issue through multiple advisory committees, collaborative efforts, investments, legislation and other policy changes. For example, the Ohio General Assembly passed Senate Bill 322 in 2017, which adopted recommendations from the [Ohio Commission on Infant Mortality’s 2016 report](#) and required the creation of the 2017 [Social Drivers of Infant Mortality \(SDOIM\) report: A New Approach to Reduce Infant Mortality and Achieve Equity](#), which was completed by HPIO.

Infant mortality prevention efforts have largely focused on public health and healthcare interventions for pregnant women, such as safe sleep education and prenatal care access. The report found that Improvements in factors beyond access to care are needed to reinvigorate Ohio’s stalled progress on infant mortality reduction.

The report prioritizes specific and actionable steps leaders can take following the COVID-19 pandemic to create change in five areas: Housing, transportation, education, employment and racism.

“Ohio will face new challenges when pandemic-related federal relief funding ends,” according to the report. “Some of these one-time funds were allocated to education, housing and transportation activities that align with recommendations in the 2017 SDOIM report, and progress on many of the goals could regress without sustained funding from other sources.”

For any questions about the analysis, or if you would like to talk with authors of the report, please call or text Nick Wiselogel at 614.530.9918 or email nwiselogel@hpio.net.