



San Francisco Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health

The Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Section of the San Francisco Department of Public Health focuses on the most vulnerable children and families, filling what would otherwise be a serious public health gap. We assess the needs of MCAH populations, and identify and address urgent MCAH issues in collaboration with key partners. The work of MCAH is critical to protecting and promoting the health of San Francisco women and children. We aim to reduce health disparities and improve health outcomes by strengthening the public health systems and services that address the root causes of poor health.

The MCAH population has been singled out for the following reasons:

- Promoting health in infancy, early childhood, and childhood is the key to lifelong health and wellness, reducing disparities, preventing and minimizing chronic conditions, and ultimately reducing health care costs.
- Prevention and early intervention in women of child bearing age, children, and youth result in proven long-term benefits in school readiness, adult productivity, life expectancy, and cost savings for more intensive services.
- The special needs of children and youth with chronic conditions demand specialized policy and program development.
- Physiological and developmental characteristics that influence risk for, and progression of, disease and disability require services tailored to the specific needs of children, youth, and mothers.
- Lacking political influence, children, youth, and low-income women are served instead by the advocacy of MCAH.
- By promoting strong and healthy families and communities, MCAH promotes the health, educational achievement, and social development of children and youth.

MCAH Programs and Core Functions

1. Improving Access to High Quality Health Care

Child Health Disability Prevention (CHDP)
 Comprehensive Perinatal Services Program (CPSP)
 Family Planning
 Fetal-Infant Mortality Review
 Health Care for Children in Foster Care Program
 Office of Childhood Hearing
 Pre-conception /Young Women’s Health

2. Promoting MCAH

Black Infant Health Program
 Prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
 Population and Place-based MCAH Programs
 CalWorks
 Child Care Health Project
 HOPE SF – Hunter’s View Pilot
 MCAH Field Public Health Nursing
 Nurse Family Partnership
 Child Welfare Services: Substance Abuse/ HIV
 Child Welfare Services: Zero to Five

3. Preventing Chronic Diseases in MCAH Population

Epidemiology
 Nutrition Services
 Feeling Good Project
 Women, Infant & Children Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC)

4. Ensuring Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

California Children’s Services
 Medical Therapy Unit

Core functions

- 1) Improving Access to High Quality Health Care
- 3) Promoting Women, Infant, Child and Adolescent Health
- 4) Preventing Chronic Diseases in Women, Children and Youth, Including Through Nutrition and Physical Activity
- 5) Ensuring Comprehensive Health Care for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Essential MCAH Services in the Department of Public Health and SF Health Network

- Improve Access to Health Care Services. Link vulnerable and yet-to-be-reached populations to enrollment and needed personal health services. Prioritize low income and CYSHCN. Promote utilization of clinical preventive services, e.g., family planning, lactation support, tobacco cessation.
- Investigate Health Problems affecting women, children and youth.
- Inform and Educate the Public about maternal, youth, and child health issues.
- Engage Community Partners such as health care providers, families, child and youth advocates, the general public, and others to identify and solve maternal and child health problems.
- Promote and Implement Evidence-based Practices, such as WIC provision of *Participant Centered Education*, *Motivational Interviewing*, *Breastfeeding Peer Counseling*, and the *Baby Behavior* parent education program.
- Assess and Monitor MCAH Health Status to identify and address health problems.
- Maintain the Public Health Work Force to effectively address maternal and child health needs.
- Develop Public Health Policies and Plans that support individual, provider and community health efforts, e.g., *Access to Timely Prenatal Care Committee*.
- Enforce Public Health Laws that protect the health and safety of women, children, and youth and that ensure public accountability for their well-being.
- Ensure Quality Improvement. Partner with other agencies to monitor health status, service effectiveness, accessibility, and quality to identify and solve community health problems.

Emerging Priorities

A “Life Course Approach” recommended by federal health authorities points out that health is “particularly affected during critical or sensitive periods” and that “the broader community environment – biologic, physical, and social – strongly affects the capacity to be healthy.” SFDPH-MCAH leverages clinical and community experience, shared resources, and collaborations to develop upstream policies and systems that improve health and living conditions.

Critical problems of childhood and family health that are inequitably exacerbated by the high living costs, density, and social segregation of cities like San Francisco include: stress, anxiety, depression and other mental illness, social isolation, family violence and abuse, malnutrition, and physical inactivity. MCAH continues to reassess health status and community resources, redesigning programs accordingly.

Examples of new efforts that promote wellness during the most critical phases of life include:

- Designing, implementing and evaluating new strategies to close the Black-White gap in health outcomes. Strategies range across family planning, social support and community dialogues on racism, i.e., *Equity in Young Black Women’s Health and Birth Outcomes Project*.
- Supporting young women during pregnancy and families during the early years of childrearing with a new, evidence-based home visiting program - *Nurse Family Partnership* – and through a revamped group centered model for young Black women – *Black Infant Health*.
- Implementing standards of excellence in parental leave, lactation accommodation, and wellness policies, i.e., “*Healthy Mothers Workplace*” Assessment & Award.
- Ensuring national standards of excellence in childcare nutrition and physical activity, i.e., “*Healthy Apple Award*” for child care centers and family child care providers.
- Realigning Public Health Nursing services to children in *Child Welfare Zero to Five Program* from telephone case management to home visiting using evidence-based *Safe Care* model.