



DRAFT – FY25 Infant Health Annual Report

Maternal and Child Health



TEXAS
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1. Introduction

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) oversees maternal, perinatal, and infant health activities using the Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies (HTMB) strategic framework to improve maternal and infant health and safety by advancing quality care, implementing evidence-based prevention, and addressing Texas mothers and babies' health disparities. DSHS oversees and implements state and local initiatives, campaigns, and programs within each of the five HTMB framework pillars listed below.

Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies				
Maternal and Child Health Knowledge, Leadership, and Partners				
Individual and Public Awareness and Knowledge	Professional Education	Community Empowerment	Community Improvement	Perinatal Quality Improvement Network
Increase Knowledge to Change Attitudes and Behaviors for Improved Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes - Hear Her Texas Maternal Health & Safety Campaign - Infant Health & Safety Campaign - Texas Lactation Support Hotline- After Hours Services - Right from the Start Campaign - Information for Parents of Newborn Children Pamphlet - Maternal & Infant Dashboards	Strengthen Competencies and Prepare Professionals to Transmit Knowledge, Skills, and Motivation to Patients, Clients, and Colleagues - TCHMB Summits - DSHS Grand Rounds - Online Provider Education - Webinars, Workshops, Seminars, and Technical Trainings - Train the Trainer Courses - Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative	Engage Community Partners to Strengthen Networks for Collaboration, Innovation, and Collective Impact - HTMB Community Coalitions - Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Networks - State and National Networks - Community Forums and Listening Sessions	Foster Development of Policy, Systems and Environments to Reduce Barriers, Promote Healthy Lifestyle Choices, and Optimize Health Outcomes - High-Risk Maternal Care Coordination Services Program - Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite Program - Infant Sleep Safety Promotion - Smoke Free Environments	Drive System Changes to Support Adoption and Diffusion of Quality Improvements for Maternal and Infant Health and Safety - Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee - TexasAIM Initiative - Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies - Congenital Syphilis Prevention - Texas Violent Pregnancy Death Prevention Program - Maternal and Neonatal Levels of Care Support
Maternal and Child Health Epidemiology, Surveillance, Research, and Analytics				
 Our mission is to improve maternal and infant health and safety by advancing quality care, implementing evidence-based <u>prevention</u>, and addressing health disparities for all Texas mothers and babies.				

2. Breastfeeding: A) Percent of infants ever breastfed, B) Percent of infants exclusively through 6 months.

United States health organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, agree breastfeeding is the biologically normative way to feed an infant, offering health benefits over the life course for both mom (reduced risk of high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and breast cancer) and baby (reduced risk of diarrhea, asthma, and obesity). The AAP recommendations are to exclusively breastfeed for approximately six months after birth and continue breastfeeding along with complementary foods as long as mutually desired by mother and baby for two years or beyond¹.

Despite year-on-year data showing 80% of Texas mothers initiate² breastfeeding, barriers remain. This is especially true for Texas WIC mothers who often face economic and other social support challenges and report not reaching their personal breastfeeding goals.³ The 2022 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Immunization Survey (NIS) data reported 83.4% of Texas mothers ever breastfed (any type of breast milk feeding including direct breastfeeding or fed breast milk, even once). However, the number of infants exclusively fed breast milk through three months was significantly lower at 43% (2021-46.2%). This decline continues with exclusive feeding breast milk through six months (medical recommendation) at 26.4% DSHS uses the Healthy People 2030 targets as the standard for improving breastfeeding rates. These targets include increasing:

- The proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through age 6 months to 42.4% by 2030 (Texas' 2022 rate was 26.4%)
- The proportion of infants breastfed at 1 year to 54.1% by 2030 (Texas' 2022 rate was 37.5%)

¹ Joan Younger Meek, Lawrence Noble, Section on Breastfeeding; Policy Statement: Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk. *Pediatrics* July 2022; 150 (1): e2022057988. 10.1542/peds.2022-057988

² 2022 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Survey, <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding-data/modules/2022-rates-any-exclusive-bf-state.htm>

³ 2025 Texas WIC Feeding Practices Survey. <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/wic-providers/wic-breastfeeding>

State Action Plan Activities and Successes

DSHS is committed to addressing breastfeeding barriers through programs, campaigns, and initiatives that offer support in three focus areas: hospital and healthcare systems, worksites, and community.

In fiscal year 2025 (FY25), DSHS implemented new efforts in the Right from the Start Campaign (RFTS) launched in FY24. Efforts included engaging public health partners in program outreach to support breastfeeding quality improvement (QI) and adopt breastfeeding best practices known as the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding (Ten Steps). RFTS highlights opportunities to support Step 3 - prenatal education and Ten Step 10 - post-discharge breastfeeding, strengthen continuity of care, and support network message alignment.

All RFTS materials are available to download in English and Spanish. Materials are promoted and shared with statewide agency partners including the Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Family Support Services (FSS) programs. Additional promotion occurred through complementary DSHS programs including the Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies Community Coalitions (HTMB CCs), Obesity Prevention Program (OPP), Regional Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Help Me Grow Texas community contacts.

In FY25, RFTS campaign developed the following assets:

- A new Outreach Partner Guide to provide a call to action for hospital partners to engage in the Ten Steps and share state breastfeeding resources.
- Additional supplemental outreach materials including:
 - An outreach presentation
 - A sample campaign feedback survey
 - One-page information sheets on Becoming a Breastfeeding Champion and Building Breastfeeding Supportive Teams
 - A State and National Breastfeeding Resource Template to personalize with local resources
- A targeted digital media campaign with bilingual digital ads to directly encourage material downloads.

Paid RFTS social media ads ran March 27, 2025 to May 2, 2025, adding new public health outreach partners to reach a broader set of stakeholders to influence maternal care policies both in and out of hospital settings. New creatives included messaging emphasizing collaboration (i.e., hospitals + community = total

breastfeeding support) and added opportunities to use regional callouts separated high-efficiency, low-impression mid-size cities from the larger statewide audience and to personalize the message. These strategies proved successful with regional callouts producing stronger efficiency than the statewide audience group. The RFTS social campaign achieved over 1.1 million impressions and reached over 300,000 individuals. Outreach partner materials made up 36% of total RFTS material downloads in FY25.

As part of its Perinatal Quality Improvement Network, DSHS funds facilitation services for the state Perinatal Quality Collaborative (PQC), known as Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies (TCHMB). TCHMB is a collaboration of over 150 health care providers, hospitals, state agencies, and other stakeholders developing strategies, designing projects, and collecting data to improve Texas birth outcomes. In December 2024, the TCHMB Executive Committee voted to approve a new healthcare quality improvement project called Lactation And Safe Sleep Opportunities In Texas (LASSO-TX). The LASSO-TX project goal is to improve maternity and neonatal care practices related to breastfeeding and safe infant sleep during Texas delivery hospitalizations. LASSO-TX development activities in FY25 included:

- TCHMB held an expert panel meeting with 15 state and national breastfeeding and safe sleep experts to review and provide input on project key drivers and measurement strategies and to identify best practice change ideas to use in the project change package guiding improvement work
- TCHMB developed a faculty application and conducted outreach to recruit a project faculty team
- TCHMB consultants drafted the project's family of measures
- DSHS worked with the Maternal and Child Health Quality Improvement System (MCHQIS) development team to build project dashboards. The dashboards will help LASSO-TX staff, faculty, and hospital improvement team members track key project measures and monitor the quality of a hospital's reported data
- DSHS began coordinating with HHSC WIC staff about opportunities for WIC to provide state and local subject matter expertise for the LASSO-TX project while fostering community breastfeeding support partnerships with participating LASSO-TX hospitals

In 1995, the Texas Legislature authorized the Mother-Friendly Business Designation and DSHS implemented the Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite (TMFW) program. TMFW entered its 30th year in 2025 and continues expanding its reach and strengthening worksite support for mothers returning from maternity leave. In

FY25, DSHS partnered with public health and other outreach partners promoting TMFW. DSHS shared TMFW resource materials at the Healthier Texas Summit, the TCHMB Summit, and the HHSC Virtual Wellness Event. During FY25 DSHS presented at State Agency Wellness Benefits Coordinator's Conference, HTMB Coalition meetings, the South Central Texas Breastfeeding Coalition meeting, and a university-level public health course. DSHS continues to provide Technical Assistance (TA) to local and state health departments promoting TMFW designation.

In FY25, TMFW designated 41 worksites from 28 employers, a decrease of 19.6%, from 51 worksites representing 30 employers in FY24. This decrease may be due to DSHS focusing outreach efforts on TMFW employers designated for over 10 years, re-establishing program connections, and verifying continued program participation. In FY25, DSHS completed updates to TMFW materials and program webpages. DSHS developed new materials including a Manager's Toolkit, a Communications Toolkit, and TMFW door hangers and signs to designate work setting lactation spaces. All materials are available in English and Spanish. DSHS created a TMFW video featuring a large Texas-based supply chain and logistics employer. The video is available on DSHS social media accounts and utilized in a promotional campaign. TMFW materials updated by DSHS received positive employer and stakeholder feedback. DSHS continues to focus on TMFW program sustainability planning and redesignation efforts.

In FY25, DSHS produced a TMFW social media campaign in August 2025 during National Breastfeeding Month. The social media campaign resulted in 6,036,603 impressions, 103,808 clicks and a click-through rate of 1.93% on YouTube and 0.22% on LinkedIn and Meta, exceeding expected campaign results. The TMFW website visits reached 60,711 during this time which was an increase from the 2,600 average monthly views before the August 2025 social media campaign.

Public Health Region (PHR) FY25 TMFW Promotion Activities

During FY25, PHR staff promoted TMFW Program and provided direct TA through the following activities:

- Northwest Texas PHR 1 distributed TMFW resources and materials to 43 employers across their region.
- Piney Woods PHR 4/5N Texas staff updated their TMFW designated regional site lists to identify employers for outreach and shared TMFW materials to 138 worksites across 11 counties.

- Central Texas' PHR 7 Centerville Clinic created a lactation room for staff and clients and completed TMFW designation. In addition, 23 Central Texas staff members attended TMFW Program training.
- South Texas PHR 11 captured 311 check-ins from women utilizing regional TMFW lactation rooms.

In FY25, DSHS continued to implement HTMB CCs by funding eight local health departments, city governments, and one public hospital district. In FY24, HTMB CC's work with the Northeast Public Health District (NET Health) moved to a new DSHS contract to support the High-Risk Maternity Care Coordination Services Pilot Program, reducing coalitions from nine to eight in FY25. HTMB CCs worked with community partners in high infant mortality rate communities to engage local efforts to address perinatal and infant health and safety issues and reduce disparate infant mortality outcomes. HTMB CCs include public health entities, faith-based organizations, universities, and other health partners working to build breastfeeding barrier awareness and available resources to improve breastfeeding outcomes. In FY25, DSHS centered collective impact to support state infant health priorities for all HTMB CC work plan activities. FY25 work plan activities included creating a menu of breastfeeding activities for coalitions to personalize based on capacity, partnerships, preference, and their identified community needs. Individual HTMB CC FY25 activities are outlined below.

During FY25, the Amarillo HTMB CC improved coalition and TMFW program requirement awareness and provided available outreach resources. This HTMB CC worked with the DSHS TMFW Coordinator to develop a list of 80 local basic-level designated worksites and encouraged designees to level up to silver and gold level designations through program presentations and email outreach. This coalition successfully connected 11 employers to state TA and support.

The Brownsville HTMB CC promoted state breastfeeding resources including Texas Lactation Support Directory (TLSD) and Texas Lactation Support Hotline (TLSH). This HTMB CC added five new TLSD listings and a zip code locator feature allowing families to find area resources. The coalition created a TLSD flier (available in English and Spanish) to promote at community events including a woman's expo, non-profit resource fair, and a firefighting women's luncheon among other events. This coalition hosted its third annual community breastfeeding event, sharing information on dad's breastfeeding roles and breastfeeding self-care. This event recognized the need to build "los dos cosas," awareness which is a culturally significant barrier to feed baby both breast milk and formula in Latino communities. This coalition included a topic on understanding the differences between formula

and breast milk and a bulletin board activity captured the community's voice where mothers could share why they breastfeed. One mother wrote, "I choose to breastfeed for the bond & the nutrition of my children."

In FY25 the Dallas County HTMB CC chose their target activity to increase awareness of the Texas Ten Step program (TTS) and coalition. This included improving coalitions understanding of common healthcare and hospital systems' breastfeeding barriers. This coalition surveyed coalition members to identify those wanting to know more about the TTS Program which led to development of two new trainings. One training was Delighted to Doula which trained five doulas and another training supported three home visiting programs including Nurse-Family Partnership, Child and Family Institute, and Afterbirth. All trainees plan to incorporate TTS information into their practice and share with community partners.

The Laredo HTMB CC prioritized breastfeeding promotion, protection, and support over the last few years. In FY25, program efforts focused on TMFW promotion, breastfeeding continuity of care after hospital discharge, building community awareness of breastfeeding barriers, and promotion of state and local resources.

Key activities included:

- Adding four new TMFW designated worksites through creative marketing advertisements including a first-ever TMFW bus wrap
- Developing new partnerships with two local birthing hospitals to begin exploring opportunities to create a post-discharge warm hand-off process between hospital and community breastfeeding support organizations
- Developing an operation procedure guide for use of a lactation station to create a breastfeeding mother's outdoor space during community events. This station offered community and state resources links and public breastfeeding protection law awareness
- Holding several community breastfeeding events during August (National Breastfeeding Awareness Month) including a mayoral breastfeeding proclamation, lactation station promotion, WIC Baby Café tour, and featured lactation expert speakers

The Port Arthur HTMB CC supported TMFW program promotion and building community resources and breastfeeding barrier awareness. During the fifth annual Jefferson County Breastfeeding Celebration the coalition engaged 16 community partners surpassing the goal to engage three to six community partners and improving overall member engagement. Port Arthur event activities included a TMFW escape room and sharing state employee resource guides for returning to work, a breastfeeding family feud game, and safe infant sleep (SIS) information amplifying all state campaign resources. In FY25, Port Arthur also created a new

monthly in-person breastfeeding support group called the lactation social hour hosted by three area International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) in locations across the city. Participants directed topic discussions and IBCLCs provided common breastfeeding challenge information.

The San Antonio HTMB CC assigned their reproductive life planning workgroup to promote the TMFW program to build community worksite lactation awareness. During world breastfeeding week, the San Antonio coalition hosted a TLSH and TMFW program resource information tables. See more information on coalition breastfeeding in the infant mortality section.

In FY25, the Tarrant County HTMB CC partnered with a local breastfeeding coalition to host an all-day training event for 72 participants. Training content covered infant feeding recommendations, human milk composition and benefits, infant health outcomes of an exclusive human milk diet, how to identify the relationship between prescribed medications and breastfeeding, and supplementation best practices when mother's own milk is not an option. Participants were also taught skills in promoting breastfeeding within the first hour of life, hand expression, pumping, latch techniques, assessing breastfeeding problems, and breastfeeding counseling. Continuing education (CE) hours were offered to healthcare partner attendees. The Tarrant County coalition also engaged local college and university students in preconception peer education sharing and breastfeeding educational resources from the Texas WIC program. Additionally, this coalition provided 15 community presentations on various MCH topics including breastfeeding for partners and families.

The Waco HTMB CC focused on TMFW program breastfeeding promotion by helping two worksites earn TMFW designation. The Waco coalition also built infant and young child feeding in emergencies (IYCF-E) awareness using online CDC toolkit resources to develop 300 emergency breastfeeding kits. Breastfeeding kits contain disposable medicine cups, ice packs, breast milk storage bags, nursing pads, hand sanitizer, a document bag, flashlight, cooler, face mask, and sterile gloves. These kits were distributed to partner organizations during family-centered community events. In FY25 the Waco HTMB CC also developed a new partnership with their public health district emergency preparedness office and will continue this effort in FY26. The Waco HTMB CC's goal is to improve local cooling/warming shelters policies to create safe infant feeding spaces offered to families during critical events.

DSHS supported the Mommy, Are You Ready? (MAYR) prenatal community training to provide lactation and material development subject matter expertise. In FY26, MAYR development is planned to complete with sharing across all DSHS PHRs. In FY25, DSHS program staff met with trained certified lactation counselors (CLCs) PHR staff to provide technical assistance and support program regional continuity. DSHS also met with newly hired PHR staff providing program activity information and resources.

FY25 PHR Breastfeeding Activities

- Piney Woods Texas provided breastfeeding tents at four festival and fair events to support breastfeeding-friendly spaces.
- Southeast Texas hosted four breastfeeding classes with 65 participants. Knowledge of breastfeeding practices increased by 26% (62% - 88% pre/post training). This PHR held MAYR classes featuring prenatal health, nutrition, and breastfeeding information, and two of their public health nurses are also CLCs. A breastfeeding class attendee shared, "I am currently breastfeeding and it's the best, but I have learned so much today that I didn't know."
- South Central Texas participated in breastfeeding education and celebration events reaching approximately 641 individuals. Field offices representing six counties collaborated on celebrate your pregnancy events, partnering with WIC, local hospitals, and other local organizations. In Boerne, staff organized a breastfeeding awareness walk during August Breastfeeding Awareness Month. Seven regional staff members became CLCs including six public health nurses and one community health specialist. South Central Texas headquarters provided each field office with breastfeeding tent supplies (e.g., tent, weights, fans, chairs, signs, etc.) at community events. Field office staff continued participating in the Hill Country Breastfeeding Coalition and the South-Central Texas Breastfeeding Coalition. The coalitions aim to increase breastfeeding rates in Kendall, Bandera, Kerr, Gillespie, Frio, LaSalle, Dimmit, and Zavala Counties.
- West Texas educated 165 clients on breastfeeding using DSHS Safe Sleep for Babies: A Community Training and CDC educational materials. This was an increase of 54 clients in FY25 over FY24 levels.

DSHS provides subject matter expertise (SME), TA, and support to improve state agency collaboration and breastfeeding messaging alignment and identify resource development opportunities. DSHS met quarterly with the HHSC WIC program to

share program updates, identify resource development collaboration opportunities, and align messaging. These collaborations include:

- HHSC [Texas Ten Step \(TTS\) Program](#) – SME support and strategic planning to cross-promote resources including the Texas Lactation Support Directory (TLSD), Texas Lactation Support Hotline (TLSH) and website promotion of [TexasWIC.org](#), [BreastmilkCounts.com](#), and [HCPBreastfeeding.com](#). DSHS worked with WIC staff to update information collected on the TLSD form and shared the form with HTMB CCs. DSHS encourages HTMB CCs to promote the TLSD to improve breastfeeding resources listed and better connect mothers with local support. In FY25 DSHS encouraged TTS Coordinator engagement in the [TCHMB](#) Lactation and Safe Sleep Opportunities in Texas (LASSO-TX) quality improvement project planning scheduled to launch in FY26. The TTS program provides Texas birthing hospitals TTS adoption resources. TTS also supports RFTS campaign material promotion through designated hospitals and WIC staff.
- DSHS works with HHS Texas WIC program to fund the TLSH after-hours calls with the City of Dallas administering daytime call support. In FY25, 4,687 after-hours calls were received, 3,761 (80.2%) included IBCLC phone consultation. DSHS meets monthly and quarterly with City of Dallas as part of continued process improvement efforts. FY24 identified the need to increase: the percentage of completed after-call surveys, all calls answered by an IBCLC, and timely invoicing. The FY25 TLSH scope of work was updated to include improved data collection and expand hotline awareness in low-use state areas. In FY25, DSHS developed a promotional TLSH rack card scheduled to launch in FY26.
- DSHS provides representation during TCHMB neonatal committee meetings. In FY25, one of the next TCHMB QI projects is LASSO-TX. The decision to focus on breastfeeding and SIS improvement projects arose from regional advisory council's maternal and neonatal designated hospital interest. In May 2025, TCHMB held an expert panel meeting with statewide and national subject matter experts and shared program resources including the RFTS and SIS campaign resources. Staff received positive feedback from all attendees.
- Program TA for the OPP state staff and local level TMFW community grantees.
- DSHS provides breastfeeding module content SMEs for the HHSC Texas Health Steps (THSteps) Online Provider Education program. In FY25, DSHS staff highlighted state programs and resources such as the TLSH and WIC partner resources including [BreastmilkCounts.com](#) website and the TLSD. Newly added content focused on breastfeeding and breast milk as a key recommendation to reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), formula marketing, and opportunities to support continued breastfeeding including the use of banked donor human milk. In FY25, data reported 3,344 THSteps module completions compared to 3,522 in FY24, a 5% decrease which is consistent with yearly changes. DSHS promoted these and other MCH

modules at TexasAIM learning session booths, at TCHMB Summits, and encouraged public health outreach partners to promote the breastfeeding modules. See Child Health Injury Prevention for more information on THSteps and Maternal Health Report for details on TexasAIM learning sessions.

Performance Analysis

In 2024, 74.5% of Texas' eligible hospitals participated in the biennial CDC Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) survey (reported via CDC listserv) an 11% increase from 2022 participating hospitals. Despite this increased interest, ideal practices vary within the seven mPINC survey domains self-reported by hospitals. Texas' lowest domain score – discharge support was 75 out of 100 and within that domain the lowest scores were related to practices requiring direct breastfeeding observation before discharge and hospital limits on formula gifts and free samples. These data are consistent with the 55% increase in breastfed infants provided infant formula within two days of life from Texas' 2022 NIS.

In FY25, TLSH after-hours (TLSAH) clinical calls decreased from 4,304 in FY24 to 3,761 in FY25. From FY20 (3,236) through FY25 (4,688), total annual calls supported by TSAH increased by 44.9% or 1,452 calls. DSHS worked with City of Dallas, WIC to increase the number of clinical calls audited each month from 5% to an average of 9.75%. Greater clinical call analysis adds additional data informing DSHS breastfeeding programs and collaborative efforts with state and local partnerships including HHSC WIC, TCHMB, regional MCH staff, and grantees. In FY25, DSHS used a new promotion strategy to collaborate with HHSC WIC to promote TLSH to all Texas WIC families via texting platform. HHSC WIC reported increased daytime call volume. TSAH call volume also increased 67.8% with 314 total calls in June 2025 to 527 in July 2025 and call volume remained high at 389 calls in August 2025. DSHS and HHSC WIC are planning more combined outreach in FY26.

Challenges

DSHS develops programs addressing system-level breastfeeding barriers. DSHS leverages relationships with community outreach partners including HTMB CCs, PHR regional staff, TexasAIM hospitals, TCHMB, and WIC TTS initiatives to share DSHS information and resources. TSAH call logs indicate a need to improve in-hospital breastfeeding assessments and reduce non-medical formula supplementation for

breastfed infants to improve the number of women reaching the medical recommendations to exclusively breastfeed for six months. WIC program families may need additional breastfeeding support as they may experience higher than average social barriers. All families need access to early and skilled lactation support after discharge to help address each mother's unique barriers.

Available Texas breastfeeding data is limited to national collections such as CDC NIS and mPINC. The Texas Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and WIC Infant Feeding Survey remain the main data sources to inform program direction and initiatives.

Despite adding two new TMFW designations, the number of TTS hospitals decreased by 3% from 150 in FY24 to 146 in FY25. Most non-redesignations were due to rural hospital closures with one facility stating leadership's desire to obtain formula company free materials. Of 216 eligible Texas birthing hospitals, five TTS facilities remain enrolled in the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) designation pathway. To date, Texas has nine BFHI-designated facilities which steadily declined due to waning interest, challenges with cost and requirement to pay for formula, and competing health priorities since 2017.

Opportunities

DSHS will continue to explore opportunities to improve state-level breastfeeding data collection and analysis including mPINC, PRAMS, and in-hospital infant feeding data analysis. DSHS staff serve on the Texas PRAMS steering committee which identifies opportunities to increase PRAMS survey response.

In FY26, DSHS will procure a contract for a new PIHS awareness, education and communication campaign and will continue to expand the initiative to address breastfeeding barriers and increase support for all Texas families.

DSHS will continue to support state agencies (WIC, OPP, and FSS) and grantees (HTMB CCs) with breastfeeding program promotion efforts. Planning began in late FY25 to develop and host a statewide webinar series to launch in FY26 in collaboration with the TTS program featuring Ten Step information and resources.

DSHS will encourage hospital participation in the 2026 mPINC survey to improve eligible hospitals response percentages. In FY26, DSHS will fund a statewide breastfeeding and SIS QI through TCHMB. MCH breastfeeding SMEs and program

resources will feature and support improved Ten Step adoption. DSHS will prioritize the new PIHS campaign scheduled to launch during FY26. Efforts to promote the jointly funded TLSH campaign will connect mothers with limited breastfeeding access to IBCLCs and other breastfeeding experts. DSHS will use hotline call data to inform unique needs, trends, and barriers to support PIHS campaign messaging and TCHMB project program sharing with healthcare providers.

In FY25, MCH developed work plan activity buckets encouraging HTMB CCs to personalize activities based on interest, capacity, and resources. This effort supports HTMB CCs collective impact, work, and alignment with state infant health block grant priorities (breastfeeding, SIS and infant mortality reduction). The breastfeeding bucket introduced an IYCF-E activity using CDC and state resources. Based on local Waco HTMB CC efforts, DSHS connected with the state Emergency Preparedness and Response volunteer coordinator. In FY26, IYCF-E information and developed resources will be added to the TexasReady.gov website. Collaboration needs proved timely during July 2025 when the Texas Hill Country experienced sudden flooding resulting in the loss of young Texans and serves as a reminder that natural disasters are prevalent statewide.

TMFW is the longest running workplace lactation program in the United States. DSHS tracks mentions of TMFW in national publications such as the [National Academies 2025 report, "Breastfeeding in the United States: Strategies to Support Families and Achieve National Goals."](#) Leveraging this positive recognition, TMFW is poised to increase outreach across Texas to employers, employees, and other stakeholders.

3. Safe Sleep: A) Percent of infants placed to sleep on their backs, B) Percent of infants placed to sleep on a separate approved sleep surface, C) Percent of infants placed to sleep without soft objects or loose bedding

The CDC reports 3,700 infants die suddenly and unexpectedly each year in the United States. While SIDS has declined since the 1990s due to public health campaigns like Back to Sleep (now Safe to Sleep), many parents still do not follow safe sleep practices (Moon et al., 2022)⁴. Safe sleep practices vary widely in the United States due to socioeconomic status, education, cultural beliefs, and geographic location. Provisional data show from 2023 to 2024, SIDS moved from the third leading cause of death (4.1 deaths per 10,000 live births) to the third 3.0 leading cause of infant death⁵.

[2021-2022 Texas PRAMS](#) data shows 76.1% of mothers placed infants on their back to sleep. Comparatively, 2019-2020 Texas PRAMS data showed 76.2% of mothers placed infants on their back to sleep. Among Non-Hispanic Black mothers, 56.7% placed an infant on their back to sleep. This trend shows more outreach and education is needed. A notable reduction in this practice from 89.5% in 2019-2020 to 71.1% in 2021-2022 was seen among Non-Hispanic Other mothers indicating a need for further investigation and potential outreach.

Texas PRAMS 2021-2022 data also shows 34.8% of Texas mothers placed infants to sleep on a safe sleep surface and 50.3% reported placing infants to sleep without loose bedding or soft objects. Texas 2021-2022 PRAMS survey data showed non-Hispanic White mothers were more likely than non-Hispanic Black or Hispanic

⁴ Moon, R. Y., Carlin, R. F., & Hand, I. (2022a). Evidence Base for 2022 Updated Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment to Reduce the Risk of Sleep-Related Infant Deaths. *Pediatrics*, 150(1). <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-057991>

⁵ Texas Department of State Health Services. Infant Mortality and Morbidity Dashboard. Texas Health Data. <https://healthdata.dshs.texas.gov/dashboard/maternal-and-child-health/infant-health/infant-mortality-and-morbidity>

mothers of any race to place their babies to sleep on their backs, a safe sleep surface, and with no loose bedding or soft objects in the sleeping area.

State Action Plan Activities and Successes

In FY25, DSHS partnered with local and state public health agencies and provided community stakeholders TA by promoting the Let's Talk – *Safe Infant Sleep* (LTSIS) community training program designed to reduce infant mortality rates (IMR) associated with SUID and sleep-related deaths. LTSIS focuses on parents and caregivers of infants age 0 to 12 months using behavior change theory and evidence-based framework to encourage safe sleep practices. In FY24, DSHS identified LTSIS program improvement areas such as adding name tags, participation certificates, sign-in sheets, and table tents during community training events. In FY25, DSHS made improvements to LTSIS toolkits and other educational materials. DSHS created toolkit explainer videos to use alongside printed materials. LTSIS videos provide verbal instruction to aid understanding and increased material use. DSHS also produced a SIS awareness video titled Dear Baby available on YouTube in English and English with Spanish subtitles.

In FY25, DSHS engaged Southeast Texas in LTSIS training, research evaluation, training promotion, resources and SIS messaging with community educators, parents, and other infant caregivers. DSHS partnered with the Port Arthur HTMB CC (Jefferson County) and Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine in Harris County to offer LTSIS community partners training-of-the-trainer (ToT) events. The 42 trained attendees were tasked to train their organization's staff members by using the conversation-based approach and parent tools. This task supports the DSHS Institutional Review Board's LTSIS approval to complete a public health practice research study. The study assessed whether LTSIS improves parent and caregiver adherence to SIS practices. A self-assessment survey, pre-test, and post-test were collected at the three March 2025 Southeast Texas ToT events. One-month and three-month LTSIS follow-up surveys were also sent to the 42 participants. These LTSIS surveys were also collected from replication events. DSHS will review responses and take lessons learned into account with future LTSIS program data collection.

In 2025, DSHS also ran a companion digital media campaign for October SIDS Awareness Month across Meta LinkedIn, and Southeast Texas programmatic channels to support regional ToT trainings. DSHS created targeted LTSIS ads to

reach individuals who could utilize the LTSIS toolkit resources and training. The companion digital media campaign performed well with 5,264,600 impressions, 51,164 clicks, and a click-through-rate of 1.03% exceeding industry standards. This campaign used both digital and traditional media campaign methods. Digital YouTube ads featured the new Dear Baby creative materials. DSHS focused on areas with high traffic and high infant mortality rates and used traditional and digital regional billboards. The billboard medium achieved an estimated 24 million impressions. DSHS placed static placements including posters and displays with take-one brochures in doctor's offices, OBGYN and pediatric clinics to engage parents and caregivers in these settings. Waiting room TV screens shared the Dear Baby video, where available, leading to an estimated one million impressions.

In FY25, DSHS developed a multidisciplinary SUID strategy team to participate in cohort A of the Children's Safety Network (CSN) national [Child Safety Learning Collaborative](#) (CSLC). Collaborative members included multiple DSHS program areas. Monthly CSLC meetings and CSN TA allowed the state team to develop new SUID awareness resources to sustain current and planned IMR work. DSHS launched a public health practice research study and built out SIS webpages. For more information on this effort, see the Infant Mortality section.

In FY25, DSHS engaged HTMB CCs in statewide LTSIS training rollouts with all eight coalitions who chose to implement either the ToT or parent and caregiver trainings and clear the crib (CTC) activities. DSHS created personalized coalition LTSIS work plan activity bundles that included LTSIS training materials review, circle of support (COS) community mapping sustainability planning tools, SIS community resource list population, and post-training follow-up listening sessions or surveys. Data tools used included pre- and post- surveys to assess improved SIS knowledge and overall training satisfaction. Where possible, coalitions partnered with DSHS Title V PHR staff to serve as training facilitators alongside coalitions. In FY24, DSHS staff received initial LTSIS training pilot activities. LTSIS and general SIS promotion activity summaries are listed below.

The Amarillo HTMB CC conducted LTSIS training for Head Start and Nurse-Family Partnership. Additional Amarillo SIS activities included distributing 150 safety approved sleep surfaces and collaboration with the DSHS Safe Riders program to pair SIS education during crib and car seat distributions.

The Brownsville HTMB CC collaborated with the Texas A&M Colonias program and Lincoln Park High School to provide LTSIS parent and caregiver classes and CTC

events. Lincoln Park High School is dedicated to serving pregnant and parenting students. Fifteen students attended the LTSIS class with all information provided in Spanish. Sixteen expectant moms and supporting family (grandparents and partners) received an SIS myths and facts presentation and a CTC activity. The Brownsville coalition provided additional coalition member organizations and local Girl Scouts of America chapter CTC events. The Brownsville coalition also included SIS as a topic in their podcast series and promoted information during their August 2025 community Breast Milk and Motherhood event.

The Dallas County HTMB CC hosted two three-hour LTSIS trainings for 10 participants from Parkland hospital home visiting programs, doula care, and nurse-family partnership staff. The Dallas County coalition used CTC as an ice-breaker activity and concluded both trainings with a ToT graduation using DSHS developed certificates. The coalition shared “this helped to empower participants to take what they learned and share it within their own organizations and networks, amplifying reach”. Training participants also shared the interactive training components and discussions deepened their understanding and best practices implementation readiness in their own programs.

The Laredo HTMB CC adapted LTSIS training materials and presentations to meet time constraints and increase participant engagement and message retention. These adaptations included building out the myth and facts section to address generational misinformation and provided bilingual handouts and tip sheets. Training was offered to 11 trainees from nine partner organizations including public health, hospital staff, and family support services.

The Port Arthur HTMB CC served as a key LTSIS training and data collection site to support public health practice research by providing 15 area organizations training and follow-up activities. LTSIS facilitators maintained a continued relationship with DSHS PHR staff and local child fatality review team (CFRT) lead organizations. The Port Arthur coalition adapted LTSIS presentations to include a Mentimeter data collection format to increase surveys and myth and fact section participant engagement. The Port Arthur community resource template turned into the Southeast Texas SIS Resource Guide and was distributed to all coalition members. Two original trainees, Garth House and the Young Men’s Christian Association replicated training for 18 attendees. The Port Arthur coalition was featured in a DSHS SUID webinar series sharing COS mapping information and LTSIS implementation with a statewide audience.

The San Antonio HTMB CC hosted two LTSIS trainings one with coalition members and city employees and a second training with eight area partner organizations including Healthy Start and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority to engage in MCH awareness building activities. San Antonio trainings included CTC activities and group calls to support post-LTSIS training follow-up.

The Tarrant County HTMB CC incorporated SIS education into their health care providers big three education all day training featuring breastfeeding and count the kick information. The Tarrant County coalition cited event turn-out success to DSHS collaboration efforts promoting topics, a streamlined registration process, and offering free CE. Sixty-eight of 72 attendees (94%) reported the presentations led to knowledge improvement.

The Waco HTMB CC hosted two LTSIS training events with a total of 17 attendees through four partner organizations. Follow-up LTSIS activities included a post-training survey, resources connections through community resource list development, and subsequent training plans.

In FY25, the HHSC WIC program's client web lesson titled Getting Ready for Baby, included DSHS SIS messaging and resources and had 6,853 English and Spanish speaking WIC clients complete the lesson. The Getting Ready for Baby lesson was launched mid-year in FY24, which led to the 33% increase from FY24 (4,967).

TCHMB Safe Infant Sleep Activities

In December 205, TCHMB executive committee voted to approve a new neonatal project, LASSO-TX. The project is scheduled to launch in FY26 and will focus on improving maternity and neonatal care breastfeeding and safe infant sleep practices during delivery or NICU hospitalizations. See the Breastfeeding section of this report for more information about the LASSO-TX project.

PHR FY25 Safe Infant Sleep Activities

PHR staff used state and national safe sleep resources to support alignment, consistent messaging, and 2022 AAP safe sleep recommendation promotion. During FY25:

- Northwest Texas PHR 1 held LTSIS professional training session for Amarillo Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies Coalition, St. Joseph's project staff from three counties, and developed a two-hour DSHS-certified community health worker training curriculum. DSHS PHR staff provided SIS materials and

education at 38 events including conferences and schools and health/resource fairs reaching 6,857 individuals. Staff provided 26 safe sleep kits (cribette, wearable blanket, pacifier, educational materials, safe sleep board book, and a fitted sheet) to parents at prenatal classes and childcare centers and 30 safe sleep kits to birthing hospital new parents. One parent shared they are thankful for a safe sleep kit because they now have a safe place to put their infant during nap times, while the parent needs a shower, or if the parent needs a break.

- North Central Texas PHR 2/3 held a Public Health Nursing Community Health Specialists safe sleep presentation. DSHS PHR staff promoted SIS at two health fairs reaching 103 participants and twenty community partner safe sleep promotion visits totaling 40 attendees. DSHS PHR staff completed 196 safe sleep education encounters, distributed 185 safe sleep for babies books, made 13 specialized health and social services referrals, and provided three safe sleep kits with educational materials and a cribette.
- Piney Woods Texas PHR 4/5N staff provided LTSIS education to 843 participants at East Texas Regional Service Area – Community Services, Health and Human Services, Expectant Heart, mothers enrolled in Delivering Resources and Empowering All Mothers program, Healthy Me Healthy Baby Coalition, WIC mothers, Mommas and Munchkins, and expecting mothers and fathers. DSHS PHR staff shared SIS educational materials at CFRT's, School Health Advisory Councils, and coalition meetings. DSHS PHR staff also distributed approximately 75 cribettes to Nurse Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, Expectant Heart, and during one-on-one meetings. DSHS PHR staff disseminated DSHS SIS environment on page infographic to parents, pediatricians, and during all car seat distributions and installations.
- Southeast Texas PHR 6/5S provided LTSIS education and resources during 36 community meetings, 16 community engagements, six safe infant sleep sessions, and five community baby showers engaging 1,639 individuals. LTSIS participants shared stories about friends and family who lost children to SUID. This shared communication opened conversations during educational events and led to greater interest in updated risk reduction information.
- Central Texas PHR 7 staff hosted five LTSIS parent and caregiver education events to 30 participants. Twenty-three DSHS PHR staff members received LTSIS ToT instruction and 17 regional clinics received Cribs for Kids® materials to support LTSIS parent and caregiver education.
- South Central Texas PHR 8 staff hosted and participated in 35 SIS materials and resource community engagement and educational events serving approximately 753 individuals. Throughout the year, DSHS PHR staff utilized the LTSIS toolkit and partnered with local hospitals, childcare facilities, and community organizations to provide safe sleep education. Uvalde and

Pearsall staff members facilitated a LTSIS ToT event hosted by the San Antonio HTMB Coalition and Bexar County San Antonio Metropolitan Health District.

- West Texas PHR 9/10 staff promoted safe sleep resources through client education and crib distribution. DSHS PHR staff educated clinic clients, local health care providers, hospitals, and other community partners using National Institutes of Health Safe to Sleep® campaign materials and the DSHS LTSIS training. Participation totaled 163 parents/caregivers which is an increase of 20 from FY24. Staff provided two cribettes and SIS education to families without a safe sleep environment for their children.
- South Texas PHR 11 staff shared SIS information to 226 mothers during becoming a mom presentations. Staff showed participants the difference between a safe and unsafe sleep environment and provided 218 cribettes to mothers who did not have a safe sleep surface for their infants.

Performance Analysis

In FY25, DSHS achieved many planned activities to support SIS education including the following key metrics outlined below:

- Partnering with HHSC Texas Health Steps Online Provider Education Program to provide an Infant Safe Sleep (ISS) module content SME. 3,436 providers completed the ISS module which is a 10% decrease from FY24
- Updating content creating opportunities to add newly created SIS campaign resources
- Conducting a public health practice research study with two key community partners in Texas regions with the highest SUID deaths rates
- Engaging CFRT and multiple DSHS program areas in cross program monthly collaboration to develop FY25 statewide community level SUID prevention strategies
- Hosting a statewide SUID webinar series
- Continuing local and regional HTMB community coalition TA, training, and PHR partners by presenting quarterly SUID updates
- Promoting safe sleep and the LTSIS Toolkit at the Healthier Texas Summit, TCHMB summit, and the Isabel Davis Foundation for Safe Children Inaugural Conference
- Rolling out LTSIS training to all eight HTMB CCs with all coalitions expanding this training in FY26

Challenges

In FY25, DSHS examined current programming and pivoted to highest priority projects which led to discontinuing CSLC Cohort B participation plans. The Infant Health and Safety Campaign also faced research delays and did not complete the LTSIS public health practice research study.

Opportunities

DSHS will continue to assess needs, gaps, and opportunities to promote SUID risk reduction strategies through:

- State-wide resource dissemination to support community uptake and conversations-based implementation approaches to reduce sleep-related infant deaths
- Engaging community partners and disseminating SIS community training resources
- Building collective impact through state SUID strategy team and DSHS State CFRT Coordinator collaboration to engage CFRT's statewide
- Collaboration with TCHMB and TexasAIM to elevate campaign work and promote SIS materials

4. Infant Mortality Disparities: Ratio of Black to White infant mortality rate.

Provisional birth and death data shows the 2024 Texas infant mortality rate (IMR) is 5.5 deaths per 1,000 live births which is a 5.17% decrease from 5.8 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2023. The 2024 Black to White infant mortality ratio remains high, with non-Hispanic Black IMR (10.2 deaths per 1,000 live births) more than twice as high as the non-Hispanic White IMR (4.8 deaths per 1,000 live births).

DSHS continues to look for opportunities to build health outcomes awareness. This includes sharing state IMR data in presentations and conferences. Additional data goals include strengthening state and local partnerships to support top-down and boots on the ground efforts to reduce infant mortality differences.

State Action Plan Activities and Successes

In FY25, DSHS developed a multidisciplinary SUID strategy as part of the state's national SUID work. One effort included hosting the first statewide SUID webinar series featuring building sustainable SIS programs, supporting parents and caregivers through SIS practices, building SUID awareness, and Texas CFRT role topics. The series garnered 1,188 registrants and 641 total live attendees. DSHS presented LTSIS training and toolkit resources and implementation to national SUID partners engaged in CSLC. Geographic Information Systems mapping highlighted LTSIS training locations for public health organizations and parents and is planning launch in FY26.

DSHS promoted new Southeast Texas SIS campaign messaging aligning billboards and point of care materials with LTSIS training and public health research in areas with high IMRs. For more information on PIHS campaign activities, see Breastfeeding and Safe Sleep sections.

Congenital Syphilis (CS)

PHR Activities

Northwest Texas attended 38 events and served 6,857 individuals. Staff provided multi-topic CS information and education materials at conferences, schools, and health/resource fairs.

The Brownsville HTMB CC received funding from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to support two CS focused podcasts (English and Spanish) with program development and promotion.

DSHS CS Summit

On September 20, 2024, DSHS hosted the Congenital Syphilis Summit. This CE event convened maternal and pediatric health care partners working in hospital, ambulatory, and academic settings as well as public health and human service professionals, community-based organizations and other working to improve the health of women and infants in Texas. The theme was "What Can I Do Today?" with the goal for every attendee to leave with ideas on how they can impact Congenital Syphilis in their communities.

The Houston-based event included:

- An in-person morning session providing two DSHS Certified CEUs provided for Community Health Workers
- Networking Lunch
- Afternoon sessions by state and national speakers including 3.75 hours of continuing education for multiple disciplines. Both in-person and virtual attendance options were offered for the afternoon sessions, which were attended by over 260 participants.
Sessions included:
 - Keynote Presentation: Congenital Syphilis in Texas and Data Modernization Efforts
 - Plenary Speaker: National Perspective on Congenital Syphilis
 - Guidelines for Syphilis Screening in Pregnancy
 - Roundtable Discussion- What Can We Do Today to Prevent Congenital Syphilis?
 - Fetal and Infant Mortality Review/Partner Services

DSHS provided continuing education for the following disciplines and number of participants:

- Community Health Worker (5)
- Certified Health Educators (18)
- Physicians (77)
- Certified in Public Health (4)
- Nursing (14)
- Social Work (15)

TCHMB Stops CS Project

In February 2024, the TCHMB Executive Committee voted to approve a plan for TCHMB to develop congenital syphilis QI toolkit project in response to rising congenital syphilis rates. The Screening And Treatment In Outpatient Pregnancy Care To Prevent Congenital Syphilis (STOP CS) project will provide a toolkit that physicians and other health care professionals can use to improve patient care for prevention of congenital syphilis transmission. Specifically, the toolkit should prepare physicians to plan and implement clinic-based QI activities to increase detection, reporting, and treatment of syphilis among their pregnant patients while earning Maintenance of Certification Improvement in Medical Practice (MOC Part IV) credit.

FY25 STOP CS activities included:

- Throughout FY25, TCHMB staff met with DSHS to propose and review project concepts including plans to conduct toolkit pilot testing with six outpatient clinics;
- In June 2025, TCHMB staff selected members for a work group including geographically diverse subject matter experts to provide consultation for project planning and development;
- In July 2025, TCHMB held a STOP CS work group monthly meeting kickoff; and
- DSHS subject matter experts developed the STOP CS project family of measures and worked with the MCHQIS development team to develop a project dashboard for clinical-reported data visualization. The measurement strategy include options for disaggregating data by race and ethnicity as well and a measure related to pregnant patients' non-medical drivers of health.

HTMB CC's

DSHS has provided funding for HTMB CCs with high infant mortality rates communities across the state since 2013. In FY25, the HTMB CCs completed the following work to help reduce IMR:

The Amarillo HTMB CC prioritized hosting LTSIS training in Potter County (IMR 7.6). The Amarillo HTMB CC added several community resource list resources including additional crib distribution sites, parent support groups, and infant care resources. DSHS PHR staff distributed this resource list throughout the community during training, car seat checks, and at local events.

The Brownsville HTMB CC focused on nutrition, breastfeeding, and mental and physical wellness promotion. This coalition included Mexico partner organizations to provide the border community access to important information. The Brownsville coalition also created three educational podcasts in English and Spanish on breastfeeding, CS, and SIS. Brownsville HTMB CC also created a new postpartum support group focused on maternal mental health topics and included fathers in the June 2025 discussion.

The Dallas County HTMB CC established two workgroups to address food insecurity (food access and breastfeeding work) and sexual and reproductive health education (sexual transmitted infection prevention, safe sleep, prenatal and preconception health work). This coalition held a Latch and Learn over Lunch event in celebration of Black Breastfeeding Week using Ten Steps education to engage Parkland Hospital clinical staff and women's health educators.

The Laredo HTMB CC provided LTSIS training and addressed common co-sleeping practice in Latino households by facilitating real-life caregiver scenarios group discussions. Trainers did not criticize traditions but instead opted to inform and empower families with safer alternatives while honoring their desire for closeness and bonding. The Laredo coalition provided resources in English and Spanish.

The Port Arthur HTMB CC promoted regional SIS campaigns awareness through billboards and point of care education materials in doctors' offices, clinics, and pharmacies. This coalition hosted SIS coffee chats and a SIS education booth at the August 2025 community breastfeeding event. The Port Arthur coalition also created the Giving Tree community care closet connecting Jefferson families with personal hygiene products and breastfeeding and SIS education.

The San Antonio HTMB CC prioritized Black and Latino populations through two workgroups. These workgroups review coalition outputs for cultural and linguistic appropriateness and lead community conversations through the Los Suenos de Mama Platicas and African American Health Disparities Council. In FY25, the San Antonio coalition partnered with the City of San Antonio's Office of Access to Care to host IBCLC's panel discussions promotoras, and doulas on the importance of breastfeeding, infant health impact, and doulas as birth advocates for 33 community attendees. This coalition also participated and shared resources at a city-wide Annual Baby Walk in the Park with 300 attendees. The event focused on IMR and honors families who experienced infant loss.

The Tarrant County HTMB CC held community training for health care providers which included breastfeeding, SIS, and the national count the kicks training resources. The Tarrant County coalition also partnered with a local trainer to support Mothers & Babies stress management during the perinatal period curriculum for pregnant and postpartum mothers in English and Spanish for 60 attendees. In May 2025, the Tarrant County coalition held three preconception health community roundtables with 40 attendees to support local Fetal IMR team recommendations. The roundtable attendees learned more on what is working, what gaps exist, and how to identify feasible action areas to share with community decision makers.

The Waco HTMB Coalition created workgroups to focus on women's health, perinatal health, and infant health activity development. Each workgroup developed a holistic wellness project plan aligned with eight dimensions of wellness (women's health), infant health, safety, and screening resource binder for development and distribution (infant health), and a community breastfeeding survey (perinatal health). All Waco materials and events featured state campaigns, resources, and initiatives.

Texas Health and Safety Code, Section 161.501 requires health care providers to offer information during pregnancy and delivery to parents and other infant caregivers. In FY25, health care providers distributed the Information for Parents of Newborns booklets in English (69,310 copies) and Spanish (17,728 copies) which is a 42% increase from FY24 (61,279 total). In FY25, publication downloads increased by 71% in both English and Spanish with 1,123 downloads (316 in FY24).

Performance Analysis

The CSLC SUID strategy team developed the following AIM statement during the CSLC collaborative: By 2030, reduce the ratio of Texas non-Hispanic Black mothers (63.4%) and non-Hispanic White mothers (85.7%) who report placing babies on their backs to sleep to 50%. 2021-2022 Texas PRAMS data show the percent of non-Hispanic White mothers who used the supine (back) position (85.49%) was 1.5 times higher than that for non-Hispanic Black mothers (56.93%).

In FY25, DSHS supported improving MCH program knowledge and capacity to develop public health programming. DSHS surveyed statewide partners including DSHS PHR Title V staff and HTMB CC grantees leading to the Expanding Your Public Health Toolbox webinar series development. DSHS collaborated with the University of Kansas Center for Community Health and Development to host this three-part educational program engaging over 518 registrants and 251 live attendees between July and September 2025. Topics included developing a social marketing campaign, collective impact, and program evaluation.

Challenges

DSHS identified the need to support public health partner capacity. Partners, including DSHS PHR staff and HTMB CCs, reported local data limitations to inform programs and interventions. In FY 26, DSHS will increase LTSIS training, provide additional statewide webinars, and build local CRFT collaboration to improve data collection.

The number of Texas hospitals participating in BFHI and TTS program designation continues to decrease. Rural hospital closures continue to create statewide areas where healthcare access is extremely limited or non-existent also known as health care deserts. These desert areas reduce opportunities for Black women and their babies receiving Ten Step recommended lactation practices that improve health outcomes across the life course.

Opportunities

Despite not engaging in CSLC Cohort B, the Texas SUID strategy team continued state level meetings to identify collaborative work areas throughout FY25. This includes:

- Engagement in SCFRT meetings
- Support for the DSHS Safe Riders Program to pair safe infant sleep education with car seat safety checks opportunities
- Statewide CFRT resource development

Ongoing CSLC participation benefits include continued sharing of Texas SIS resources with national SUID partners resulting in other state inquiries and requests for material use including the Nebraska Department of Health.

In FY25, during the Texas 89th legislative session (2025) House Bill 37 or Everly's Law passed and DSHS started Perinatal Bereavement Care Initiative (PBCI) program development and implementation. PBCI includes a hospital recognition program for Texas maternal levels of care designated hospitals, bereavement care training and support for hospital staff, and perinatal bereavement cooling device procurement. PBCI also establishes bereavement care and support for all Texas families experiencing fetal demise, stillbirth, and infants born with life-limiting conditions. DSHS began planning in late FY25 to develop a contract scope of work for training and device procurement and shipping. The PCBI program website launched in July 2025 and gained 26,647 total views.

DSHS is improving state data collection to better inform programs and resource development by updating the FY26 TLSAH SOW to further identify lactation care deserts and Texas areas with low hotline usage. Sharing data with DSHS PHR staff will enhance outreach coordination and TLSH promotion. DSHS plans to utilize rich TLSAH data gathered each month to inform future work.

- HTMB CCs will improve work plan bundle engagement to support state block grant alignment priorities including breastfeeding, SIS, and reducing Black to White infant mortality ratios.
- Support the TCHMB LASSO-TX project planning by collaborating with national and statewide breastfeeding and SIS experts along with TCHMB members.