REVIEW to ACTION
WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT MATERNAL MORTALITY

State Name:

Wisconsin

SUCCESS STORY

LEVEL OF SUCCESS

☐ PROVIDER ☐ FACILITY ☐ SYSTEM ☐ COMMUNITY ☒ DATA

SUCCESS STORY OVERVIEW

In partnership with Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) leadership, the Wisconsin Maternal Mortality Review (MMR) program helped to write and release a Health Alert through the DHS Health Alert Network (HAN) to encourage urgent efforts to intensify COVID-19 vaccine education and to accelerate primary vaccination and booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines for people who are pregnant, recently pregnant (including those who are lactating), who are trying to get pregnant now, or who might become pregnant in the future.

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THE CHALLENGE

The Wisconsin Maternal Mortality Review Program identified a recent increase in the number of pregnant or recently pregnant people who have died from COVID-19 in Wisconsin. These deaths occurred in people who were unvaccinated and developed COVID-19 disease during pregnancy, which resulted in either early delivery or miscarriage. In some cases, the infant did not survive.

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THE SOLUTION

MMR program staff notified Wisconsin Department of Health Services leadership to the recent increase of pregnancy-associated deaths related to COVID-19 infection. All deaths were to individuals who were not vaccinated.

Based on the increase in pregnancy-associated deaths due to COVID-19, the decision was made to write and release a Wisconsin Department Services Health Alert through the Health Alert Network (HAN) to raise awareness of this critical issue.

The Health Alert was intended for public health and health care personnel and response partners. A key message was that Wisconsin providers should intensify COVID-19 vaccine education and promotion efforts among the groups referenced above.

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THE RESULTS

The Health Alert was released on December 17, 2021.

All recommendations can be reviewed in the Health Alert here:
https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDHS/bulletins/3017389

This Health Alert was written in collaboration with Jasmine Zapata, MD, MPH, FAAP, MMRT Co-Chair, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Community Health and Dr. Ryan Westergaard, MD, PhD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases.

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METHODS OF SUSTAINABILITY

MMR program staff continue to conduct ongoing surveillance of MMR data. Although Maternal Mortality Review Teams do not function as rapid reviews of deaths, routine MMR case ascertainment and screening processes may allow for the identification of emerging issues relevant to maternal health.