**Success Story Template**

**Level of Success Story:** *Please align your success story with implementation of a recommendation from your maternal mortality review committee. Indicate here the level or area of focus of that recommendation as it aligns with the MMRIA Committee Decisions Form:*

* *PROVIDER: An individual with training and expertise who provides care, treatment, and/or advice*
* *FACILITY: A physical location where direct care is provided - ranges from small clinics and urgent care centers to hospitals with trauma centers*
* *SYSTEM: Interacting entities that support services before, during, or after a pregnancy - ranges from healthcare systems and payors to public services and programs*
* *COMMUNITY: A grouping based on a shared sense of place or identity - ranges from physical neighborhoods to a community based on common interests and shared circumstances*
* *DATA (not currently reflected in the MMRIA Committee Decisions Form): An activity to improve a key step of the MMRC process – may include improving the case identification process or enhancing the comprehensiveness of data collected on cases*

***Please indicate the level of success story here:***

**PROVIDER**

**FACILITY**

**SYSTEM**

**COMMUNITY**

**DATA**

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| Success Story Overview: |
| The Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee (MMMRC) established a Subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities (Subcommittee) following release of the [Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report, September 2018](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/pdf/MMMTFJointReport2018.pdf) to support application of a health equity framework to MMMRC case review.  The Subcommittee’s work reflects the MMMRC’s commitment to comprehensive case review. The Committee is developing, testing, and refining the Discrimination Assessment and Social Determinants of Health Facilitated Discussion Tool (DASH Tool) to facilitate a standardized process for the MMMRC to consider non-clinical drivers of maternal mortality during case review. |
| The Challenge |
| Findings from the [Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report, September 2018](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/mch/pdf/MMMTFJointReport2018.pdf) showed that Black women are disproportionately and disparately impacted by maternal mortality and morbidity. The MMMRC established the Subcommittee in response to the report’s recommendations.  Additionally, Dr. Carla Ortique, MMMRC Vice-Chair and Subcommittee Chair, participated in a national workgroup that developed standard definitions for contributing factor key words of discrimination, interpersonal racism, and structural racism for the Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA) Committee Decisions Form.  The MMMRC recognized that non-clinical drivers of maternal mortality are not easily assessed from the medico-legal records and additional understanding of these drivers is needed to enhance case review, comprehensively identify contributing factors to maternal mortality, and inform development of meaningful recommendations for action to address maternal health disparity gaps. |
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| The Solution |

The Subcommittee provides guidance and expertise to support the MMMRC with applying health equity principles throughout the maternal mortality review process. To date, the Subcommittee has engaged in the following activities:

* Studied the association of decedent’s race/ethnicity with number and types of contributing factors identified by the MMMRC during review of pregnancy-related death cases in the 2012 case cohort.
* Consulted with DSHS on the development of the Texas Socio-Spatial Context Dashboard to provide information about the decedent’s community environment in the year of her death.
* Developed and tested the DASH Tool.
* Educated MMMRC members during public committee meetings on social determinants of health, their impact on maternal health outcomes, and factors that perpetuate health inequities.

The work of the Subcommittee is also detailed in the [Texas Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report, December 2020](https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/legislative/2020-Reports/DSHS-MMMRC-2020.pdf).

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| The Result |

The collective work of the Subcommittee has strengthened the MMMRC’s commitment to ensuring that both clinical and non-clinical drivers of maternal mortality are considered throughout the MMMRC review process.

The DASH Tool, developed by the Subcommittee, and tested through iterative feedback from the MMMRC, aims to enhance committee discussion and evaluation of components of the Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA) Committee Decisions Form, including committee discussion and meaningful evaluation of committee determinations on the circumstances surrounding death, to answer the checkbox question: “Did discrimination contribute to death?”; and to enhance:

* evaluation and consideration of the impact of social determinants of health, cumulative life course factors, community and indicators;
* the process for identification and description of the issue for contributing factors to the death; and
* support and development of robust system, community, and policy level recommendations for action.

The DASH Tool has been tested through practice in Texas DSHS, in coordination with the Subcommittee, is currently developing a pilot study for broader testing for feasibility and acceptability of use of the tool among other diverse state MMRCs.

To continuously improve the quality of maternal mortality review and the development of comprehensive, impactful recommendations, the MMMRC recommended in the [Texas Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report, December 2020](https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/legislative/2020-Reports/DSHS-MMMRC-2020.pdf) for continuance of the Subcommittee on Maternal Health Disparities to continue work to study drivers and root causes of racial disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity in Texas.

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| Methods of Sustainability |

To sustain gains from the foundational work of the Subcommittee requires the continued commitment of the MMMRC and DSHS to ensure maternal mortality review work is grounded in a health equity framework.

DSHS will continue to provide support for ongoing Subcommittee activities, including technical, data and administrative assistance, and promote knowledge sharing amongst MMMRC members.

DSHS, with support from the ERASE MM grant, is exploring opportunities to provide ongoing training opportunities for MMMRC members on related topics, including unconscious bias and trauma informed care.