Skills Building Sessions | Saturday, March 6

Morning Options

SK1: How Can I Engage in MCH Policy Work? Effecting Change with Big P and Little P Policies

Description: This interactive skills-building session will provide examples of the endless ways one can engage in policy work. From outlining and drafting regulatory comment letters to learning how to read, analyze, and potentially implement legislative bill text (and much more!), participants will receive hands-on training and real-life examples of policy engagement in action.

SK2 - From Principles to Practice: Implementing Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) Using Clinical Scenarios and Quality Improvement with The National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ) RMC Toolkit

Description: This three-hour interactive skill session equips maternal and child health (MCH) practitioners with practical tools to implement respectful maternity care (RMC) in clinical settings. Participants will explore the NICHQ Respectful Maternity Care Toolkit, a practical resource organized around five domains: dignity, communication, autonomy, informed consent, and accountability. Using the RMC Toolkit, participants will engage with real-world clinical scenarios to identify disrespect, practice respectful behaviors, and translate these into measurable quality improvement strategies. Through facilitated small-group discussions, participants will develop an actionable plan for advancing respectful care in their setting. This session is designed for public health professionals, perinatal quality collaboratives, clinicians, and community partners working to advance person-centered maternity care.

SK3 - Leveraging Storytelling in MCH: Innovation in Capacity Building, Advocacy, Evaluation, and Reporting

Description: This session will introduce the fundamentals of storytelling in maternal and child health and will explore the different functions of storytelling as a tool for advocacy,

building relationships, and evaluating and reporting impact. Participants will explore the different 'whys' behind storytelling and understand their role in effective systems change efforts. Participants will have the opportunity to apply storytelling principles and best practices by practicing creating and delivering a clear, compelling story to fellow attendees.

SK4 - Data for Learning: Using a Learning Mindset to Improve Programs, Partnerships and Systems

Description: Learn how to make better use of data you already have! Using data for learning doesn't require more data collection. Discover how to use information already available to drive improvement in programs, partnerships, and systems. Through hands-on activities and practical tools, participants will build a learning mindset, explore strategies for testing and learning, and create a draft Data for Learning plan to support meaningful action and decision-making. This Skills Builder was designed with MCH professionals who want to leverage existing data to make sure their programs and partnerships are working in mind. Still, anyone interested in the topic is welcome to attend.

SK5 - Data to Design: Using Public Health Data to Inform Community-Level Decisions

Description: Public health data can show us where disparities exist—but not always what to do next. This interactive session brings community-based and governmental public health partners together to interpret MCH data, identify what the data can and cannot support, integrate community context, and translate findings into appropriate programmatic or systems-level action. This session is designed for Community-based organization staff and leaders; Family and community representatives; Title V professionals; Epidemiologists, evaluators, and data analysts; Program managers and MCH practitioners; Governmental public health professionals; Professionals responsible for communicating, interpreting, or applying public health data; and Individuals using data to inform community-level decisions, programs, partnerships, funding strategies, policy, or systems change. No advanced statistical programming is required. Familiarity with basic public health measures is helpful but not necessary. The session is particularly relevant to participants who produce, communicate, interpret, or apply MCH data in needs assessment, program planning, implementation, evaluation, or community partnership.

Afternoon Options

SK6 - Housing Supply is a Public Health Issue: From Evidence to Action

Description: What can public health do about the housing shortage, and how can that help prevent and reduce homelessness among children and families? This session will explore the connection between housing supply, housing stability, and the health and well-being of children and families. Participants will learn about evidence-based policies that can increase housing supply and explore how state and local policies can support or limit housing development. Through discussion and hands-on activities, participants will consider the housing policy landscape in their own states and communities, explore policy approaches that may fit their unique context, and identify opportunities for action. Participants will also examine the unique role that public health can play in housing supply policy and brainstorm ways to bring public health expertise, partnerships, data, and perspectives to this work. Participants will leave with practical ideas for engaging in housing policy efforts in their own states and communities.

SK7 - We're All at the Table. Now What? Turning Cross-System Alignment into Action

Description: We are good at saying systems should work together. We are less practiced at figuring out what that actually requires on Monday morning! This interactive workshop will help participants examine real cross-system challenges, identify where alignment breaks down, and turn broad partnership goals into practical next steps using systems thinking, facilitation, and program management tools. This session will use real-world examples from adolescent health, behavioral health, Positive Youth Development, prevention, and related cross-system work. Participants should bring a real cross-system challenge, initiative, or outcome from their work that they would like to think through during the session.

SK8 - Strengthening Collaboration and Policy: Building Connections Across Perinatal Substance Use Systems

Description: Perinatal substance use systems and policies are complex, requiring collaboration across sectors and programs to support families. In this skills-building

session, participants will use the Perinatal Substance Use Collaboration and Policy Action Map to identify points of connection across systems, explore collaboration and policy recommendations, and consider how the map can support them in their own role(s). Participants will apply the Action Map to their own context and develop actionable next steps for fostering new connections, strengthening existing relationships, and identifying policy priorities.

SK9 - Grow your Impact through Strategic Partnerships

Description: Not all partnerships create equal value. Learn how to identify, build, assess, and sustain partnerships that advance maternal and child health goals. Participants will work through four stages of a strategic partnership framework: Assessing Readiness for Partnership, Building Mutually Beneficial Partnerships, Assessing and Learning from Partnerships, and Sustaining Partnerships. Each stage includes a practical tool participants can immediately apply in their own work. This Skills Builder was designed with MCH professionals who regularly engage with partners in mind, but anyone interested in the topic is welcome to attend.

SK10 - Preparing the Next Generation of Maternal Health Researchers and Professionals Through Mentoring: Lessons and Skills Learned from the Maternal Health Research Collaborative (MHRC) Mentoring Research Fellowship Program

Description: During the past three years, the Morgan State University Maternal Health Research Coordinating Center (MSU MHRCC) developed and implemented a mentoring research fellowship program to increase the supply and preparation of early-stage researchers to conduct community-engaged maternal health research in 19 MHRC research center sites located at minority-serving institutions in 13 highly impacted states and territories. Mentoring is a core value and methodology of the MHRC Mentoring Research Fellowship Program for engaging and preparing early-stage researchers in graduate and doctoral programs. The MSU MHRCC team will share the lessons and skills learned by providing participants with practical skills-building information and materials to develop, plan, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve a mentoring program to prepare the next generation of maternal health professionals. Also, management and administrative logistics will be reviewed. During this session, we will engage participants through practical exercises and discussion. Formal mentoring is a critical, yet often missing piece, for professional development and transition to the workforce.