



Strengthening Reproductive Health Surveillance Systems to Prevent Maternal Deaths

Public Health Problem

Women in Mississippi are at higher risk for death than U.S. women overall, according to state maternal mortality data. The state needs a surveillance system that identifies and interprets factors related to maternal mortality because such information could be used to develop targeted prevention interventions and programs for women of reproductive age.

Program Example

A public health work group oversaw the evaluation of Mississippi's maternal mortality system. CDC's surveillance system guidelines were used to identify weaknesses and opportunities for expansion. Results from the evaluation revealed that the current system's design limited the state's ability to identify opportunities for prevention activities. The findings also highlighted the potential benefits of creating a linkage to the state's infant death surveillance system. Mississippi is now developing a new maternal mortality surveillance system, which includes features recommended by CDC's guidelines. The system features components that strengthen maternal and infant mortality investigations, reporting, and risk factor identification. The state department of health hopes to use the expanded system to better inform programs involved in the delivery of maternal and infant health services.

Implications and Impact

Mississippi's experiences are a model that can be replicated in other states seeking to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their reproductive health surveillance systems.