



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Office of the Health Director

March 22, 2021

M. Kathryn Menard, MD, MPH
Distinguished Professor, Maternal Fetal Medicine
University of North Carolina School of Medicine
3009 Old Clinic Building, Campus Box 7570
Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Dear Dr. Menard,

On behalf of the EMBRACe team and the Chatham County Public Health Department, I am excited to be included in this important proposal to the National Heart Lung and Blood Institutes to engage research teams and community partners to understand barriers and expand use of the hypertension bundle to outpatient settings and to define Respectful Care.

EMBRACe – Equity for Moms and Babies Realized Across Chatham – is a collaboration created to address inequitable birth outcomes in Chatham County through an examination of equity and system and service alignment. Our collaborative is facilitated by Chatham County Public Health Department and includes a Critical Access Hospital (Chatham Hospital), a Federally Qualified Health Center (Piedmont Health Services), UNC Family Medicine, and the Department of Social Services in Chatham County. We are funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through the Public Health National Center for Innovations Grant Initiative to provide the structure this collaborative needs to function as a true health care consortium.

There is powerful alignment between our work and your proposed goals. In early January 2020, we began our work formalizing long-established connections across the partner agencies at the executive, operational and clinical level. We work in multiple domains at the foundation of inter-agency collaboration -- including data alignment and sharing, equity, and community organizing and leadership (under the guidance of Chatham Organizing for Racial Equity).

We would look forward to collaborating with yours and Dr. Alex Lightfoot's teams by:

- Participating in an Advisory Group to provide community and equity perspective to your research and the formation of the partnership that will implement the research;
- Providing input and partnership in defining Respectful Care as part of the Severe Hypertension in Pregnancy Safety Bundle through community-based participatory research methods, including community-led conversations that EMBRACe is in the process of launching;
- Sharing relevant highlights of the recent EMBRACe organizational equity assessment that examined equity practices and cultures at our partner agencies;
- Keeping EMBRACe partners apprised of your research efforts to address Severe Hypertension in Pregnancy and how ongoing efforts by respective coalition partners can complement mutual goals for improving equity in maternal and perinatal outcomes (such as public health messaging).

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the outcome of your proposal. Thank you, again, for including us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Zelek".

Michael Zelek, MPH
Public Health Director

Leading the Charge to a Healthier Chatham