

BREASTFEEDING & RACIAL EQUITY



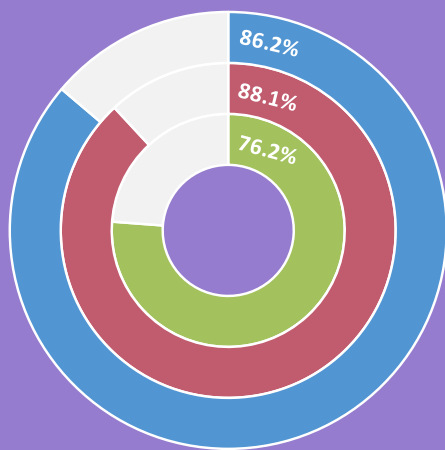
While breastfeeding is beneficial, learning how to breastfeed, accessing the right breastfeeding tools, and sticking with it can be challenging. Some groups of mothers may encounter more breastfeeding challenges on average than other groups. When a marginalized group more frequently encounters health challenges, that difference is known as a health disparity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), non-Hispanic Black (NHB) women initiate breastfeeding at a lower rate and breastfeed for fewer months than non-Hispanic White (NHW) women.¹ This disparity may exist because Black women more often experience barriers to breastfeeding such as lack of social and work support, lack of access to information, and lack of time compared to other groups of women.² Working toward eliminating the causes of health disparities helps create an equitable state where all moms and babies have the same opportunities for good health.

One intervention to help women breastfeed longer is providing a breast pump.^{3,4} However, providers may be ill-equipped and lack the time required to provide enough breast pump instruction to positively affect breastfeeding duration.⁵ Furthermore, programs that provide breast pumps to eligible mothers may not effectively communicate breast pump availability to every client.⁶

BREASTFEEDING INITIATION DISPARITIES ARE DECREASING

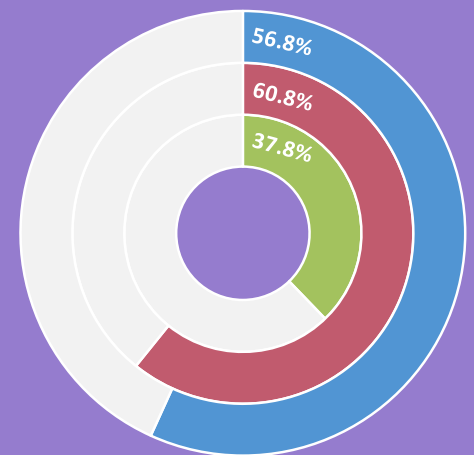
- A little less than 8 in 10 Black Michigan moms started breastfeeding their baby compared to almost 9 in 10 White Michigan moms (Figure 1).
- The difference between the percentages of White and Black moms that started breastfeeding their baby dropped a little more than two percentage points over a 14-year period (Figure 3, green trend line).

FIGURE 1: BREASTFEEDING INITIATION



- All Michigan moms
 - Non-Hispanic White Moms
 - Non-Hispanic Black Moms
- *MI PRAMS, 2016-2018

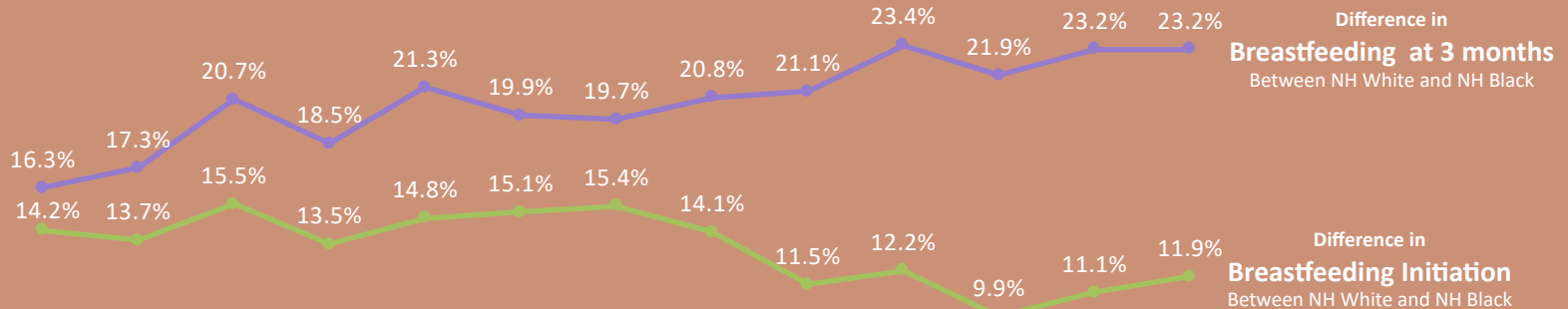
FIGURE 2: BREASTFEEDING AT 3 MONTHS



BREASTFEEDING DURATION DISPARITIES ARE INCREASING

- Almost 4 in 10 Black Michigan mothers were successfully breastfeeding their 3 month old baby compared to 6 in 10 White Michigan moms (Figure 2).
- Since 2004, an increasing percentage of Black moms are breastfeeding their 3 month old when compared to white moms, however the disparity between Black moms and White moms has increased almost 7 percentage points over a 14-year period (Figure 3, purple trend line).

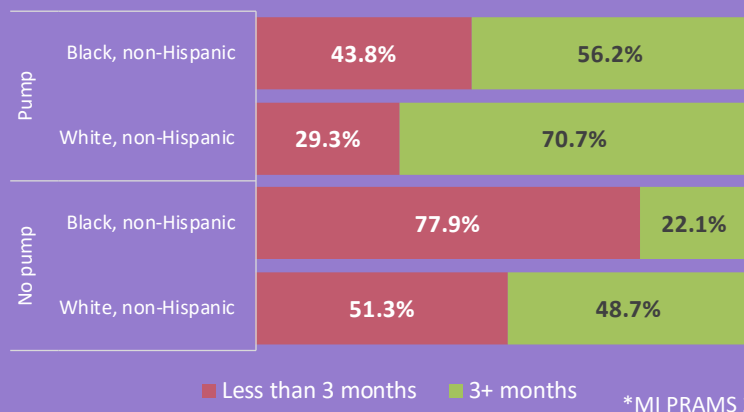
FIGURE 3: DISPARITY IN BREASTFEEDING BETWEEN NON-HISPANIC WHITE & NON-HISPANIC BLACK MOMS*



* MI PRAMS 2004-2018

BREAST PUMPS ARE A HELPFUL TOOL FOR INCREASING DURATION & ADDRESSING DISPARITY

FIGURE 4: PUMP VS. NO PUMP AT 3 MONTHS*



- Without a breast pump, 26.6% fewer Black moms are breastfeeding their baby at three months than non-pumping White moms (22.1% vs. 48.7%, Figure 4).
- Although there is still a racial disparity between Black and White moms using a pump while breastfeeding their three month old (Figure 4), having a breast pump reduces the disparity gap by about one-half (26.6% without pump, 14.5% with pump).
- When using a breast pump, over twice as many Black moms were breastfeeding at three months than Black moms not using a pump (Figure 4).

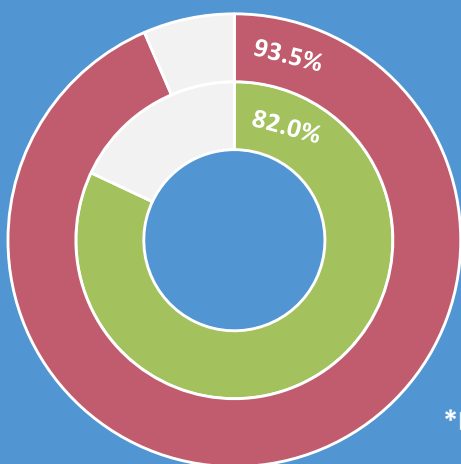


FIGURE 5: FEWER BREASTFEEDING BLACK MOMS HAVE A BREAST PUMP*

*MI PRAMS 2016-2018

TAKE ACTION

PROVIDERS CAN HELP BY MAKING SURE ALL MOMS KNOW HOW TO GET AND USE A BREAST PUMP



Breastfeeding Black moms more often report talking about breastfeeding with their prenatal care provider or their baby's doctor than breastfeeding White moms.



Michigan Medicare, private insurance under the Affordable Care Act, and most employer sponsored health insurance covers the full cost of a breast pump when prescribed by a physician. For eligible moms, WIC is also a source for no-cost pumps.



Yet, breastfeeding Black moms have less access to breast pumps than breastfeeding White moms (Figure 5) regardless if they have private (NHB, 79.6% vs. NHW, 90.3%) or public (NHB, 88.1% vs. NHW, 95.1%) post-partum insurance or if they had a postpartum checkup visit (NHB, 84.1% vs. NHW, 93.7%).

“Women...need more help, encouragement and resources to help with pumping breast milk upon return to work.”

-PRAMS MOM, 2018

SELECTED BREASTFEEDING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS

Cultural Competency:

Black Mothers Breastfeeding Association

blackmothersbreastfeeding.org/providers

Michigan Breastfeeding Network, Monthly webinars, cultural competency and equity based learning resources.

www.mibreastfeeding.org

Breast Pump Usage and Insurance Coverage:

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

www.acog.org/About-ACOG/ACOG-Departments/Breastfeeding/Understanding-Health-Care-Coverage

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