November Press Release Template – Prematurity Month, Drafted October 27, 2020

For Immediate Release: **(INSERT DATE)**

Contact: **(INSERT NAME, PHONE NUMBER)**

**Premature Birth Takes a Bigger Toll on the Black Community –Quitting Smoking Helps Reduce Risk**

(**CITY, WI**) -- SHARE THAT NOVEMBER IS PREMATURITY MONTH. DISCUSS WHAT PREMATURITY MEANS AND THE HEALTH EFFECTS THAT CAN RESULT (**FIND EXAMPLES AT** <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/features/premature-birth/index.html>). NOW EXPLAIN THAT WHILE PREMATURITY IS A CONCERN FOR ALL EXPECTING MOTHERS, IT HARMS BLACK MOTHERS AND CHILDREN MORE THAN OTHERS. IN 2018, THE U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION REPORTED THAT NON-HISPANIC BLACK WOMEN EXPERIENCED PRE-TERM BIRTHS AT NEARLY DOUBLE THE RATE OF NON-HISPANIC WHITE WOMEN.

RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT MATERNAL STRESS IS A RISK FACTOR FOR PREMATURITY, AND THESE ARE CERTAINLY STRESSFUL TIMES. UNFORTUNATELY, BLACK WOMEN FACE ADDITIONAL STRESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE FROM (**GIVE EXAMPLES: RACISM, HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF POVERTY, etc.**). INCREASED STRESS CAN ALSO LEAD TO ANOTHER LEADING FACTOR FOR PREMATURITY: SMOKING.

“Smoking is a leading risk factor for premature birth, and that adds to the increased risk that black mothers already face,” said **ORGANIZATION CONTACT**. “We want Black moms who smoke to know that there are resources to help them quit.”

SHARE SOME OF THE WAYS PREGNANT MOMS CAN GET HELP TO QUIT SMOKING.

* **TALK ABOUT THE FIRST BREATH PROGRAM. YOU CAN FIND INFO ON THE PROGRAM AT** [**https://www.wwhf.org/first-breath/**](https://www.wwhf.org/first-breath/)
* **ENCOURAGE MOMS TO CALL THE WISCONSIN TOBACCO QUIT LINE AT 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669). THEY CAN ALSO TEXT “READY” TO 200-400**
* **ENCOURAGE MOTHERS WHO ARE ON MEDICAID TO TALK TO THEIR PHYSICIAN ABOUT THE QUIT SMOKING SERVICES AVAILABLE THROUGH THE MEDICAID BENEFIT**

“Tobacco is one of many factors that can impact preterm birth,” said Krissy Alaniz of the Wisconsin Women’s Health Foundation. “Fortunately, the evidence-based First Breath program is available in Wisconsin to help pregnant women and their families stop using tobacco. First Breath focuses on the root causes of tobacco and uses a strength-based approach to help pregnant people and their families overcome nicotine addiction.”

CLOSE BY SHARING YOUR ORGANIZATION’S COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING HEALTH INEQUITIES IN WISCONSIN **TALK ABOUT ANY WORK YOUR ALLIANCE IS DOING TO SUPPORT PEOPLE OF COLOR (AND ESPECIALLY, WOMEN OF COLOR) IN YOUR COMMUNITY. THIS COULD INCLUDE NEW PARTNERSHIPS, EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES, VIRTUAL EVENTS, ETC. ENCOURAGE FOLKS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR GROUP BY SHARING YOUR URL, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.**

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