

Maternal Health Accessibility in Dallas and Austin, 2010-2020

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In 2020, maternal mortality in Texas was three times the US average but its geography and drivers remain unclear. Effective access to MCH services reduces maternal mortality but remains inequitable due to affordability and transportation costs particularly for rural residents and minority populations. Even in urban areas with better MCH facility access, vulnerable populations face challenges. In effect, the spatial-temporal trends of MCH access among these populations in urban Texas remain unclear. This study explores the geography of MCH facility access in the Dallas Fort-Worth Metroplex and the city of Austin from 2010-2020. Using zip code level demographic and socioeconomic data from the American Community Surveys, CDC WONDER maternal mortality data, and geocoded MCH facility data, we examine the spatial-temporal trends of MCH access and address how disparities in MCH contributes to MCH access. Preliminary results show that pockets of severely limited access persist in counties considered to have good MCH access. Improving MCH access for vulnerable urban populations in these areas is crucial to reduce maternal mortality rates.

Key words: Spatial-temporal trends, maternal mortality, geocoded data, maternal mortality rates, zip code level data.

Primary author: TETTEH, Priscilla (University of North Texas)

Presenter: TETTEH, Priscilla (University of North Texas)

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