

THE DIMOCK CENTER

Healing and caring for the community for over 150 years.

The Dimock Center's Prenatal Care During the Coronavirus

The Coronavirus pandemic has pushed the pause button on most aspects of life in the United States. Despite this standstill, life has continued. Women are continuing to become pregnant and babies are being born. How do we keep our pregnant women safe during this time? From the first ripples of the pandemic in the United States, it became clear that communities of color were disproportionately experiencing not only higher rates of illness, but also higher rates of death.

At The Dimock Center, we strive daily to combat the health inequalities faced by the community that we serve. Our population is especially at risk as many women are frontline workers in service industries and need to continue to work to provide for their families. The risks associated with this type of employment are magnified by our population's reliance on public transportation. Furthermore, many of our patients are unable to self-quarantine or work from home during this time. Our pregnant women are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 based on their socioeconomic reality. Pregnant women of color are 3-4 times more likely to die from childbirth and childbirth complications than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. This is a sobering, baseline fact, regardless of the current pandemic.

"Preparing expecting moms for delivery during this pandemic is vital to the health of mom and baby. One thing a patient said that has stayed on my mind was, 'this is my second pregnancy with you and there is no one I would rather have taking care of me during this scary time.' That made me feel so great because our patients know us and trust us." - Danielle Grimm, MPH, MSN, WHNP-BC, Clinical Manager, OB-GYN, The Dimock Center



Knowing that our community already faces barriers to achieving a healthy pregnancy, it became crucial for the Dimock OBGYN team to work proactively to protect and support our prenatal population during the Coronavirus pandemic.

In doing this, the OBGYN team has reframed how prenatal care is provided by creating a focused approach that minimizes time physically spent in the clinic, but simultaneously maximizing the quality of care provided. Grouping testing and certain trimester touch points has limited clinic exposure risks among patients and providers are using telehealth visits in between physical clinic appointments.

Electronic blood pressure cuffs have been purchased and loaned to high risk pregnant patients for at home monitoring. Patients are taught how to use these machines and counseled extensively on when and how to call the clinic with abnormal readings.

A triage protocol has been established for patients who now know to call Dimock first with any concerns regarding coronavirus symptoms or exposure. Testing for the virus is immediately offered with results within 24 hours. If



positive, patients are followed up with daily calls from either Dimock's OBGYN team or Beth Israel COVID-19 surveillance team to support them through the virus.

To prepare and support our pregnant women for giving birth during the pandemic, every pregnant patient is scheduled for a telehealth visit with a delivering obstetrician to discuss the current policies regarding visitors, labor support, and newborn care. This has helped decrease patient anxiety and fear about going to a hospital to deliver their babies.

Lastly, COVID-19 support information has been created for general distribution to all patients and families. This includes information about the coronavirus, information how to keep you and your family safe, and a donated fabric mask.

The uncertain nature of the coronavirus pandemic has forced us to adapt our care to better serve our community. The Dimock Center remains committed to adapting the level of care provided to prioritize the needs of our community and supporting patients through this crisis.

Written by: *Danielle Grimm, MPH, MSN, WHNP-BC, Clinical Director, OB-GYN, The Dimock Center*

About The Dimock Center: Founded in 1862 as the New England Hospital for Women and Children, the Dimock Center heals and uplifts individuals, families, and our community. Operating on a nine-acre campus in Roxbury's Egleston Square, the Dimock serves people from all Boston neighborhoods and 212 communities across the state through our Health and Community Care, Behavioral Health, and Child and Family Services. Nationally recognized as a model for the delivery of comprehensive health education and human services in an urban community, the Dimock serves close to 20,000 people annually.