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### Testing a Peer Support Program for Parents of Infants Going Home from the NICU

REACH Dissemination Committee, Maine, USA

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# Testing a Peer Support Program for Parents of Infants Going Home from the NICU

U.S. newborns requiring care in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) have an **increased risk** of long-term disability, and short-term or ongoing specialty care.

Parents of these infants report **increased anxiety and stress** in the NICU and after discharge.

## LOCATION & POPULATION

▶ Washington, D.C. hospital NICU

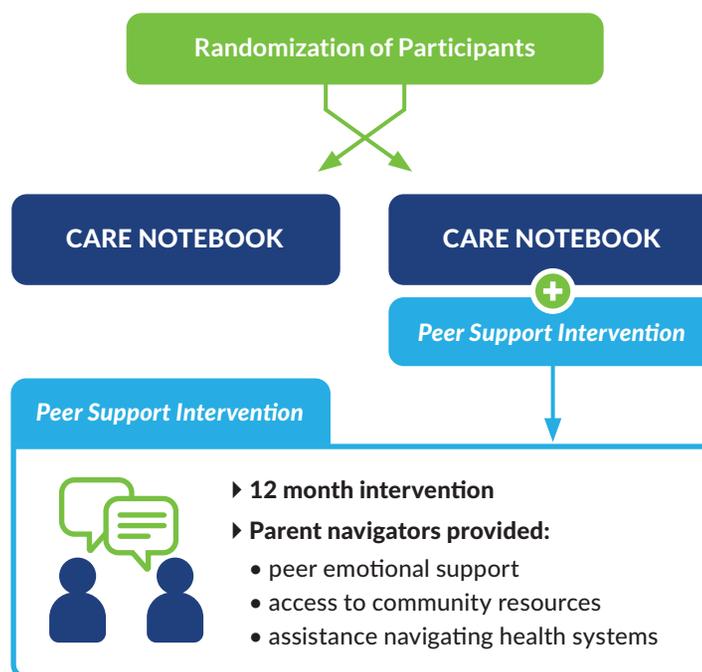
▶ 300 parents of infants discharged from the NICU

- ▶ 44% Black
- ▶ 39% White
- ▶ 8% Mixed Race
- ▶ 6% Asian
- ▶ 3% American Indian or Pacific Islander
- ▶ Average age: 30
- ▶ 89% Women



## STUDY DESIGN

The study aimed to assess the impact of peer support through parent navigation on parental mental health and infant health care use after NICU discharge.



## FINDINGS at 12 months

▶ Participants reported on measures of:

- stress
- self-efficacy
- depression
- infant healthcare utilization
- anxiety



▶ Parental Mental Health

- For both groups, **mental health outcomes improved**, with a slight decline/leveling off toward the end
- No difference in **mental health trajectories** between groups



▶ Infant Health Outcomes (between groups)

- No difference in the number of **hospitalizations or ED visits**
- No difference in **infant development**



**95%** of parents in the program felt their **needs were met and information given was helpful**

**97%** would **recommend parent navigation for others**

USED ACRONYMS: NICU - neonatal intensive care unit

## Key Take-Away

Peer support after NICU discharge did not improve self-reported parental mental health or infant healthcare utilization.

## REFERENCES

1. Fratantoni K, Soghier L, Kritikos K, et al. *Giving parents support: a randomized trial of peer support for parents after NICU discharge* [published correction appears in J Perinatol. 2022 Apr 21;]. J Perinatol. 2022;42(6):730-737. doi:10.1038/s41372-022-01341-5
2. Fratantoni K, Kritikos K, Jacangelo J, Herrera N, Jacobs M. (2020). *Testing a Peer Support Program for Parents of Infants Going Home from the NICU*. Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). <https://doi.org/10.25302/06.2020.IHS.140311567>

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