



## **Impact100 Family Finalist 2023 Sunburst Projects**

Project Title: Ending Congenital Syphilis

Sunburst Projects serves men, women, children living with HIV and those seeking to know their HIV & STD status.

Congenital syphilis is a disease that occurs when a mother with syphilis passes the infection onto her baby during pregnancy. Approximately 40% of babies born to women with untreated syphilis will be stillborn or die from the infection as a newborn. Babies born with congenital syphilis can have skeletal and facial deformities, severe anemia, enlarged liver and spleen, jaundice, nerve problems causing blindness or deafness, meningitis, or skin rashes. Newborn babies born to mothers who did not receive syphilis treatment will have to undergo 10 days of grueling and painful injections to try and combat the congenital syphilis. Even with treatment, death is still possible.

In 10 years, female syphilis cases in California have increased over 1,181% and congenital syphilis cases increased over 950%. Studies done by UC Davis School of Medicine show a higher rate of congenital syphilis among women who are experiencing homelessness.

We help unhoused pregnant women diagnosed with syphilis by:

1. Providing housing during the 16-day syphilis treatment regimen is essential to keeping them engaged in treatment which includes painful shots that leave the mother tired and vulnerable. The days between the first and second shot are the most likely time a mother drops out of treatment.
2. Overseeing prenatal care through birth with intensive case management. We support these women by monitoring their medical care, offering personalized supplies, chaperoning to appointments, and supporting them during treatment.

Impact100 funding will allow us to dedicate a full-time medical case manager to this program, provide housing during treatment, provide supplies to mom and baby. Through the delivery of compassionate services, we will reduce newborn deaths, eliminate congenital syphilis among unhoused pregnant women, and bring healthy babies into this world.