



August 21, 2023

Re: ILPQC Equity and Safe Sleep for Infants (ESSI) Quality Improvement Initiative

Dear Hospital Administrator:

In November 2023, the Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (ILPQC) will launch a new statewide neonatal quality improvement project, the Equity and Safe Sleep for Infants (ESSI) Initiative. This initiative was selected by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Statewide Quality Council (SQC) and Perinatal Advisory Committee (PAC). Building upon the foundational work of the ILPQC Birth Equity initiative, ESSI will promote neonatal equity, address racial and social inequities, and seek to reduce neonatal health disparities in sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) related to the sleep environment.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Infant mortality in the United States occurs at a high rate, when compared to other developed countries across the world. The infant mortality rate in Illinois of 6.5 per 1,000 births was higher than the US national average in 2018 with Illinois ranking 36th out of the 50 states. Leading causes of preventable death for infants include prematurity, SUID including sleep-related deaths, and complications during childbirth. The burden of neonatal death is not borne equally. Illinois has long-standing disparities in infant mortality. The SUID rate among infants born to Black birthing patients has increased by 38% since 2018, while SUID rates among infants born to White and Hispanic birthing patients have not significantly changed since 2000. If the infant mortality rates decreased to equal White birthing patients' rates of infant mortality, 212 Black fetal and infant deaths could be prevented each year (Illinois Infant Mortality Report, December 2020). Through a quality framework, the ESSI initiative will help ILPQC hospital teams equitably and respectfully provide care, improve safe sleep practices, and screen parents for social determinants of health with linkage to resources.

ESSI INITIATIVE AIMS

- 1) By December 2025, 70% of Illinois birthing and children's hospitals will address disparities and promote neonatal equity by actively participating in the ESSI initiative
- 2) By December 2025, 80% of infants will be discharged from ILPQC hospitals with a completed ESSI Bundle. An ESSI Bundle includes the following:
 - a) Awareness: Parents or caregivers report an understanding of a safe sleep environment
 - b) Readiness: Social Determinants of Health screening and linkage to appropriate resources complete
 - c) Transfer of Care: ESSI Newborn Care Plan documentation in the discharge summary

ILPQC will support all birthing and children's hospitals serving Illinois patients with hospital quality improvement resources, collaborative learning, a real-time data system, and evaluation of progress over time and in comparison to other hospitals. Hospital teams will receive a quality improvement toolkit with resources to support implementation of key strategies.

NEXT STEPS

The ESSI Initiative will launch at the **ILPQC Annual Conference on November 2, 2023**. To participate in this initiative, your hospital's ESSI's team roster should be submitted by **September 29, 2023**.

As with all of our initiatives, we cannot achieve lasting results without active support and partnership with hospital administrative leadership. We hope that you will join us in these efforts. If we work together, we will continue to bring improvement in care and outcomes for birthing people and babies across Illinois, *Making Illinois the Best Place to Give Birth and Be Born*.

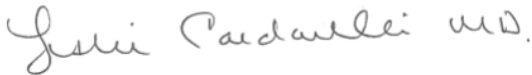
Very truly yours,



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Next Steps for Your Hospital Team

1. Develop Equity and Safe Sleep in Infants Quality Improvement team and submit an ESSI Roster Form at <https://ilpqc.org/essi/> by **9/29/23** for initiative participation.
2. Once the roster is submitted, your team will receive an Equity and Safe Sleep for Infants Readiness Survey due by **10/11/23**.
3. Attend the 2023 Annual Conference on **11/2/23** with ESSI physician and nurse leads.