



Getting Ready for the Birth Equity Initiative

Call to action for Illinois birthing hospitals to improve Birth Equity

Significant racial disparities exist for pregnant and postpartum patients in Illinois. Together we can make a difference to address these disparities. Birth Equity is defined as the assurance of the conditions of optimal births for all people with a willingness to address racial & social inequities in a sustained effort.

Severe Maternal Morbidity¹—Non-Hispanic Black women in Illinois are 2-3 times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to experience unexpected, severe complications during the perinatal/postpartum periods.

Pregnancy-Associated Deaths—Non-Hispanic Black women are 2-3 times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to die during or within one year of pregnancy.

Pregnancy-Related Deaths—Non-Hispanic Black women are 6.5 times more likely than non-Hispanic white women to die during or within one year of pregnancy from a pregnancy-related complication.

Birth Equity Initiative Key Aims:

Address Social Determinants of Health, by:

- Mapping community resources and services
- Screening all patients for identified social determinants of health needs and linking to resources / services

Use Hospital Race/Ethnicity Data to Improve Care, by:

- Accurately collecting patient-reported race/ethnicity data
- Implementing a maternal health data dashboard and stratifying data by race/ethnicity
- Incorporating a racial equity/social determinants lens in hospital maternal morbidity reviews
- Reporting and reviewing patient-reported experience data

Engage Patients, Partners, & Community, by:

- Identifying a patient or family advisor for QI teams
- Engaging with labor support partners in L&D
- Providing patient education on urgent maternal warning signs and postpartum safety

Engage Providers, Nurses and Staff, by:

- Educating providers on the importance of listening to patients and addressing implicit bias
- Implementing hiring strategies to diversify providers and staff



When do we start?

Wave 1 Hospital Teams will advise data collection process February – April 2021
Statewide Birth Equity Initiative launch May 2021

¹ <http://dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/publicationsowhmaternalmorbiditymortalityreport112018.pdf>

