



## Partnering with Patient & Family Advisors in Quality Improvement

The Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (ILPQC) engages perinatal stakeholders across disciplines and at every level, in a collaborative effort to improve the quality of perinatal care and health outcomes for Illinois women and infants using improvement science, education, and evidence-based practice guidelines.

Patient and family advisors participate in state-wide quality improvement collaborative efforts to improve health outcomes for moms and babies throughout Illinois. Patient and family advisors serve as allies for quality and safety in health care settings. A key component to the success of quality improvement work is successfully partnering with patient and family advisors to learn from their experiences to improve the quality and outcomes of care.



### Benefits of Partnering with Patient & Family Advisors

Patient and family advisors offer new perspectives and insights that can directly impact the planning, delivery, evaluation, and improvement of the safety and quality of care. Patient and family advisors help to:

- **Challenge assumptions** about the work done by quality improvement teams
- **Enhance and improve** care experience and outcomes through partnership in quality improvement efforts
- **Offer new solutions** based on personal experience and perspective from patient and family-identified needs
- **Reenergize the work** that advances quality improvement efforts

### Ways Patient & Family Advisors Support Quality Improvement Teams

Patient and family advisors provide immediate input into what is most important to and for their care experience. Patient and family advisors can support quality improvement teams by:

- **Serving as a member** of the quality improvement team
- **Educating staff and providers** on the quality improvement teams and hospital units about ILPQC initiatives
- **Providing feedback** on creation or revision of educational information, discharge plans, and patient debrief activities for quality improvement initiatives
- **Participating in ILPQC** at the state level as a patient and family advisor of the Obstetrics and Neonatal Advisory Groups



### **Checklist for Partnering with Patient & Family Advisors**

This checklist provides patients, families, hospital staff, and providers with suggestions for beginning and developing effective and sustainable partnerships.

#### **Patient and family advisors:**

- Live in Illinois
- Experienced perinatal care related to an ILPQC quality improvement initiative (e.g. preeclampsia, maternal or neonatal intensive care unit admission) within the past 2 years
- Share their stories and identify both positive aspects of experience and suggestions to improve care
- Collaborate with various patients, families, health care professionals, and public health professionals
- Communicate effectively to share insight and information to educate and motivate others to facilitate change

#### **ILPQC Hospital Teams provide patient/family advisors with:**

- A designated point of contact on the hospital quality improvement team
- Information about the quality improvement initiatives in which they are participating
- A description of their roles and responsibilities as part of the quality improvement team
- Tools and resources developed to assist in their participation in quality improvement efforts.

### **Ways to Start Working with Patient & Family Advisors**

Patient and family advisors are best recruited from physician and staff recommendations based on their perinatal experiences and are interested in volunteering their time for quality improvement efforts. Getting started can involve small steps including:

- Ensuring patients and families are aware of the varying time commitment needed to engage in the quality improvement initiative
- Inviting patients and families to share their stories in staff and team meetings
- Inviting patients and families to present and participate in staff unit orientations and in-service programming
- Inviting patients and families to team meetings to learn about their hospital experiences and learn about areas for improvement
- Obtaining feedback from patients and families on information like care transitions and discharge summary instructions.

This document was adapted from materials from AHRQ's *Guide to Patient and Family Engagement* and materials from the Perinatal Quality Collaborative of North Carolina (PQCNC).