

June 5, 2025

Re: ILPQC Perinatal Mental Health Quality Improvement Initiative

Dear Hospital Administrator:

In May 2025, the Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (ILPQC) launched the statewide obstetric quality improvement Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) Initiative with Illinois birthing hospitals. This is an important statewide quality improvement initiative selected by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Statewide Quality Council (SQC) and Perinatal Advisory Committee to engage hospital teams to implement strategies to improve mental health awareness and reduce stigma for seeking care through patient and provider education, and improve screening, treatment and linkage to behavioral health follow up for all clinical teams who care for pregnant and postpartum patients. Perinatal mental health refers to mental health needs that can occur during pregnancy and after childbirth, like depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, psychosis, post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder. Some of these conditions could be known to the patient before pregnancy or appear for the first time after delivery or after a loss and can occur through 12 months postpartum.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

One in five mothers experience depression or anxiety during pregnancy and postpartum. **The Illinois Maternal Mortality Review Committee 2018-2020 report, noted that 8% of pregnancy-related deaths were due to mental health conditions resulting in suicide, and 32% were due to substance use disorder (SUD).** Less than 15% of women with depression during pregnancy or postpartum receive treatment and less than 9% receive adequate treatment. Additionally, significant racial disparities in perinatal mental health care exist. Latina and Black women reported to be 57% and 41%, respectively, less likely to receive treatment for maternal depression than other race/ethnicity groups. **It is clear there is significant opportunity for improvement in perinatal mental health care across Illinois and a clear need to work together to improve education, screening, treatment and access to perinatal mental health care for all.**

The goal of the Perinatal Mental Health Initiative is to help hospitals facilitate systems and culture change to support patients with perinatal mental health through the implementation of the following key strategies:

1. Educate all providers on screening and treating pregnant and postpartum patients with PMH conditions using a patient centered, trauma-informed care approach.
 2. Educate patients on PMH conditions, warning signs and hotline resources, and collaborate with patients and community partners to engage community-based resources.
 3. Enhance screening of PMH conditions in the perinatal period in locations where pregnant/postpartum patients are cared for (such as during delivery hospitalization, outpatient OB care sites, emergency departments, and pediatric care sites).
 4. Establish processes for assessing and treating PMH conditions in obstetric and other care locations.
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1. Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report, Illinois Department of Public Health, October 2023

5. Enhance linkage to mental health services for improved care coordination and reduce barriers to access. Utilize hot line services (IL Doc Assist, IL Moms Line, MAR NOW, PSI) and other innovative strategies to improve access to ongoing perinatal mental health care.
6. Continue optimizing care of people with SUD through assessment and linkage to resources such as: Drug Overdose Prevention Program (DOPP) to provide free Narcan/naloxone kits and, MAR NOW, a 24-hour warmline to link patients to timely OUD treatment and coordinated follow up care.

Building upon the foundational work of the ILPQC Birth Equity initiative and the Mothers and Newborns affected by Opioids initiative, the PMH initiative will work to improve education on perinatal mental health conditions for clinical staff, patients and families as well as improve screening, treatment and linkage to resources for mental health conditions during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum (including OB delivery admission, emergency departments and outpatient locations). ILPQC will support all birthing hospitals serving Illinois patients with opportunities for collaborative learning, access to a data system to identify opportunities for improvement and evaluate progress over time and in comparison, to other hospitals, and individualized quality improvement support to help hospitals achieve their improvement goals. **The Perinatal Mental Health Initiative kicked off at the ILPQC Face-to-Face Meeting on May 21st, 2025.** At the meeting, hospital teams received a hard copy of the PMH Initiative Toolkit with resources to support implementation of key strategies to improve perinatal mental health. An online version of the PMH Initiative Toolkit is available [here](#). We will hold the PMH kickoff call with hospital teams on June 23rd, 2025.

NEXT STEPS

We have provided teams recommendations for the PMH Initiative hospital QI team roster and a PMH Initiative Readiness survey. **Please submit your hospital's [Perinatal Mental Health quality improvement team roster](#) and [PMH Initiative Readiness Survey](#) by July 15th, 2025 to participate in this initiative.** Your PMH quality improvement team must include a: nurse champion and physician champion with a Team Lead identified, labor and delivery nurse representative, inpatient postpartum unit/Mother Baby nurse representative, data abstractor, behavioral health clinician, emergency department liaison, outpatient liaison, patient or family representative, pediatric or NICU clinical representative, and social worker/case manager. Other recommended key team members that your team may find helpful to include a: data analyst/IT support, hospital administration/leadership liaison, community health/outreach liaison, and pharmacist.

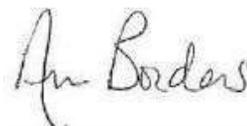
As with any of our initiatives, we know that we cannot achieve lasting results without your active partnership. We hope that you will join us in these efforts. We know that if we work together, we will continue to bring about improvement in quality outcomes for both moms and babies across Illinois and make Illinois the best place to give birth and be born.

Should you have any questions on this initiative, or on anything related to perinatal quality outcomes, please feel free to reach out to either of us. We look forward to your partnership.

Very truly yours,



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