Maternal Quality & Safety

Toolkit for Rural and Frontier Hospitals in Colorado

Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative

This toolkit was developed by the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative (CPCQC) in collaboration with:
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WHY RURAL MATERNAL HEALTH NEEDS DEDICATED SUPPORT

Rural communities face persistent challenges in maternal healthcare due to limited access to obstetric services, workforce shortages, and geographic barriers that delay timely care. In rural settings, pregnant and postpartum patients often receive care across multiple environments, including emergency departments, outpatient clinics, and inpatient units, sometimes without on-site obstetric expertise.

These realities contribute to higher rates of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity and require approaches to maternal safety and quality that reflect rural care delivery.

The Maternal Quality and Safety Toolkit for Rural Hospitals provides practical, adaptable resources to support perinatal safety across care settings. The Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative (CPCQC) recommends the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) patient safety bundles as condition-specific resources and provides this toolkit, designed to be flexible, relevant to multiple initiatives, and grounded in the realities of rural practice.

> " Rural communities are resilient, often doing more with less. This is both an incredible strength and a punishing strain on rural healthcare. CPCQC is committed to ensuring high-quality, safe, and equitable perinatal care outcomes no matter who you are or where you live. This means growing supportive infrastructure for the healthcare teams serving in Colorado's rural and frontier counties. From labor and delivery units to emergency departments and outpatient clinics, we prioritize providers' confidence, capabilities, and teamwork. "
>
> **We are stronger together!**
> **Rebecca Alderfer, CEO, CPCQC**

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

3 READINESS & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Each tool is customized for different rural health care settings, including:

- Outpatient Clinics
- Labor and Delivery Units
- Emergency Departments

These tools help hospital teams assess current practices and resources, and identify areas for improvement in rural maternal health care delivery in alignment with AIM patient safety bundles.

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RESOURCE LIBRARY
TARGETED RESOURCES FOR IDENTIFIED NEEDS

A curated collection of state and national-level resources and patient-facing materials aligned with common challenges in rural areas identified through the Readiness & Capacity Assessment Tool, including:

- Linkage to Treatment for Mental Health & Substance Use
- Human Resources
- Social Drivers of Health
- Postpartum Care
- Emergency Care Services

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PATIENT & PROVIDER QUICK-REFERENCE MATERIALS

A Pregnancy and Postpartum Quick Care Card and website designed to support continuity of care and assist patients in rural settings by keeping essential health and contact information easily accessible. Patients can carry this wallet card with them throughout pregnancy, delivery, and up to one year postpartum.

One-pager resource with patient hotlines, maternal warning signs materials, and screening tools. The tools are for use with patients in outpatient and inpatient settings for prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum care and focus on screening for mental health, Substance Use Disorder, and social determinants of health. This resouce is ideal for printing for your staff work stations.

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HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

1

COMPLETE THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT TOOL(S)

Choose the tool that best matches your setting. Complete the assessment tool collaboratively with your maternal health team.

2

DETERMINE PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

Use your assessment tool results to identify gaps and select the highest-impact areas for improvement (as identified in red or yellow boxes).

3

USE THE RESOURCE LIBRARY & QUICK REFERENCE MATERIALS TO SUPPORT ACTION

Access tools and materials that match your identified needs, organized by System Needs and Staff and Community Resources.

OUTPATIENT OBSTETRIC CARE

READINESS & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Boxes with asterisks '*' have an accompanying resource in the Resource Library and boxes with '#' have a resource in the Accompanying Documents	NOT AVAILABLE	SOMETIMES AVAILABLE	READILY AVAILABLE
System Needs			
System to send and receive medical records to inpatient settings			
Linkage to abortion resources and process for connecting patients with timely abortion care*			
Standardized process for managing and coordinating care for patients experiencing early pregnancy loss			
Linkage to formal ultrasonography for dating and anatomy scans			
Linkage to Maternal Fetal Medicine for outpatient consultation*			
Established process for transferring high-risk pregnancies to higher-level centers for specialized management or delivery			
Inpatient scheduling workflows (inductions, cesareans)			
Patient linkage to treatment and recovery support for substance use*			
Patient linkage to treatment for mental health*			
Patient linkage to primary care providers for chronic medical conditions			
Multidisciplinary work group for inpatient/outpatient providers*			
Quality improvement processes are in place*			
Staff and Community Resources			
Social worker or case manager available for consultation*			
Mental health support available for consultation in outpatient setting*			
Community resource list updated annually, including resources for food, housing, safety/intimate partner violence (IPV), mental health, substance use support			
Perinatal navigation services for individualized inpatient-to-outpatient support*			
Patient Education			
Pregnancy complications and warning signs review in clinic setting#			
Patient education on how, when, and where to seek delivery and emergency care#			
Postpartum complications and warning signs review in clinic setting#			

HOSPITAL OBSTETRIC CARE (L&D)

READINESS & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Boxes with asterisks '*' have an accompanying resource in the Resource Library and boxes with '#' have a resource in the Accompanying Documents	NOT AVAILABLE	SOMETIMES AVAILABLE	READILY AVAILABLE
System Needs			
System to send and receive medical records to and from outpatient settings			
Outpatient schedule linkages (prenatal care, postpartum follow-up)			
Linkage to treatment and recovery support for substance use*			
Linkage to treatment for mental health concerns *			
Linkage to treatment for chronic medical conditions (primary care)			
Linkage to Maternal Fetal Medicine for inpatient consultation*			
Established process for transferring high-risk pregnancies to higher-level centers for specialized management or delivery			
Multidisciplinary work group for inpatient/outpatient providers*			
Quality improvement processes are in place*			
Staff and Community Resources			
Social worker available for pre-discharge consultation*			
Mental health support available in hospital*			
Community resource list updated annually (food, housing, safety/intimate partner violence (IPV), mental health, substance use support)			
Doula support for patients and families*			
Training for EMS providers on pregnancy-related conditions and transfer protocols			
Perinatal navigation services for individualized inpatient-to-outpatient support*			
Patient Education			
Postpartum complications and warning signs reviewed by team at discharge#			
Standardized discharge summary with resources and warning signs#			

HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT CARE
READINESS & CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Boxes with asterisks '*' have an accompanying resource in the Resource Library and boxes with '#' have a resource in the Accompanying Documents	NOT AVAILABLE	SOMETIMES AVAILABLE	READILY AVAILABLE
System Needs			
System to send and receive medical records to and from inpatient and outpatient settings			
Linkage to delivery care and obstetric consultation			
Emergency Department equipped with emergency obstetric supplies and medications*			
Emergency Department equipped with emergency neonatal supplies*			
Established process for transferring obstetric patients to higher-level centers			
Linkage to treatment and recovery support for substance use*			
Linkage to treatment for mental health*			
Linkage to treatment for chronic medical conditions (primary care)			
Quality improvement processes are in place*			
Staff and Community Resources			
Social worker or case manager available for consultation in ED*			
Mental health support available in ED*			
ED and on-call staff complete annual training in obstetric emergencies*			
ED and on-call staff complete annual training on neonatal emergencies*			
Training for EMS providers on pregnancy-related conditions and transfer protocols			
Community resource list updated annually (food, housing, safety/intimate partner violence (IPV), mental health, substance use treatment and support)			
Patient navigation services for individualized inpatient-to-outpatient support*			
Patient Education			
Postpartum complications and warning signs review on discharge#			
Pregnancy complications and warning signs review on discharge#			

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Once your team completes the assessment tool, use the results to guide your improvement priorities. The Resource Library provides rural-specific tools and strategies to address the gaps you identify. For example, if your setting lacks dedicated personnel, the library includes options for leveraging existing staff roles, strengthening referral pathways, and connecting with community-based services.

LINKAGE TO TREATMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

	State resources	National resources	Patient resources
If your patient needs **mental health support** and you do not offer it in your setting, then consider these resources	Children's Hospital Colorado's Healthy Expectations Perinatal Mental Health Program supports pregnant and postpartum people with mental health conditions PIPER virtual intensive outpatient program for perinatal mental health The Parent and Family Wellness Center offers perinatal mental health tele health and accepts Medicaid. Colorado PROSPER Psychiatric consultation line to support healthcare clinicians by providing perinatal psychiatry support and referrals	National Maternal Mental Health Hotline offers free, confidential, 24/7 support in English and Spanish (1-833-TLC-MAMA) 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline offers confidential support 24/7 365 days a year North Carolina Matters Perinatal Depression Toolkit provides resources for identifying and treating perinatal depression Postpartum Support International hosts virtual peer support groups and HelpLine provides mental health support and resources 1-800-944-4733	National Maternal Mental Health Hotline wallet cards Postpartum Support International app provides mental health support, resources, and information for pregnancy, postpartum, and parenthood
If your team is having difficulties connecting with and referring to local **outpatient clinic(s) and/or community-based organizations**.	CPCQC's IMPACT BH program provides training, technical assistance, and funding to help rural hospitals, outpatient clinics, and community-based organizations collectively improve local perinatal behavioral health screening, brief intervention, and referral practices.		

LINKAGE TO TREATMENT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

	State resource	National resource	Patient resources
If our patient needs **substance use support** and we do not offer it in our setting, then we should consider these resources	Colorado Behavioral Health Administration OwnPath Care Directory and Colorado LIFTS care navigation connects uninsured and underinsured people to behavioral health services and care coordination Colorado TOUGH as a MOTHER identifies Behavioral Health Service Organizations by city and county Colorado PROSPER Psychiatric consultation line to support healthcare clinicians by providing perinatal psychiatry support and referrals Hard beauty recovery support services offer programs, resources, and events to support those recovering from substance use The Naloxone Project provides access to Naloxone for patients at risk of overdose CPCQC's Perinatal Substance Use Field Guide & Sustainability Toolkit is a practical, evidence-informed resource that combines patient and family supports, clinical guidance for care teams, and quality improvement strategies.	National Harm Reduction Coalition resources to find a local syringe access program and for patients to access mail-based naloxone on NEXT Distro Center for Addiction Recovery Support directory to locate Peer Recovery Organizations	Plan of Safe Care template is a helpful tool for families with infants who are affected by substance use during pregnancy

HUMAN RESOURCES

	State resources	National resources
If our setting does not have a **maternal fetal medicine specialist** to link to for consultation, then we should consider these resources	Colorado Fetal Center's Maternal and Fetal Telemedicine Program for access to fetal cardiologists and MFM specialists	
If our setting does not have a process for connecting patients to timely **abortion care**, then we should consider these resources	Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains to find Colorado-based care and resources	AbortionFinder search tool for finding a verified abortion provider
If our setting does not have formal **quality improvement processes** in place you should consider these resources	The Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative's website provides a detailed toolkit for each AIM Patient Safety Bundle initiative and offers hospital-level QI advising.	The Institute for Healthcare Improvement's library provides evidence-based resources to improve healthcare quality and safety, including podcasts, publications, videos, and toolkits.
If our setting needs support with **provider buy-in or staff support** of maternal safety bundle implementation, we should consider these resources	Crosswalk highlighting alignment of bundles and associated measures with other QI programs and incentive programs	
If our settings needs support developing **multidisciplinary workgroups** for inpatient/outpatient providers, then we should consider these resources	SPARK multidisciplinary workgroup list, including inpatient/outpatient clinical care, patient, and community services	
If our setting does not have reliable access to a **social worker or perinatal navigator**, then we should consider these resources	Colorado PROSPER Psychiatric consultation line to support healthcare clinicians by providing perinatal psychiatry support and referrals 2-1-1- service line connects individuals to local services	Zip code search to find free or reduced-cost resources like food, housing, financial assistance, and health care

HUMAN RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

	State resources	National resources
If our setting does not have reliable access to a **mental health provider**, then we should consider these resources	Colorado PROSPER Psychiatric consultation line to support healthcare clinicians by providing perinatal psychiatry support and referrals	Postpartum Support International online directory to find qualified perinatal mental health professionals Charlie Health's Intensive Outpatient Program provides virtual support for maternal mental health including group and individual therapy for perinatal mental health
If our setting does not have **doula support** for patients and families, then we should consider these resources	The Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing provides information and resources on the Health First Colorado doula benefit, including opportunities to engage, training resources and materials, and additional doula resources	DONA International zip code search to find DONA-certified birth and postpartum doulas DoulaMatch search to find a birth or postpartum doula to support patients and families The Elephant Circle supports families in need to find free doula support through the Expecting Changes program.

SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH

	State resources
If our patient does not have **stable or safe housing**, then we should consider these resources	[Colorado Housing Connects](#) helps Colorado residents with housing needs Colorado Division of Housing creates housing opportunities, such as [immediate housing and rental assistance,](#) for Colorado residents facing challenges to access affordable, safe, and secure homes 2-1-1- service line connects individuals to [local services](#)
If our patient does not have **transportation**, then we should consider these resources	Colorado Community Health Alliance offers [free transportation](#) to health care appointments for Health First Colorado members Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing provides a [list of Non-emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT) service areas](#) [2-1-1- service line](#) connects individuals to local services
If our patient is experiencing **food insecurity**, then we should consider these resources	[WIC Colorado](#) offers resources, knowledge, and tools to support families who qualify 2-1-1- service line connects individuals to [local services](#) (e.g., emergency food assistance, food pantries and vouchers) [Hunger Free Colorado](#) helps connect Coloradans with food and nutrition services, 855-855-4626
If our patient does not have **childcare**, then we should consider these resources	[Colorado Child Care Assistance Program for Families](#) helps families who are homeless, working, searching for work or in school find low-income child care assistance 2-1-1- service line connects individuals to [local services](#) for connection to childcare resources and referrals (e.g., licensed childcare providers, financial assistance information)

SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH (CONTINUED)

	State resources	National resources	Patient resources
If our patient is experiencing **intimate partner violence**, then we should consider these resources	Colorado's YOU have the RIGHT provides resources to support sexual assault survivors Violence Free Colorado to find a community-based domestic violence agency for free and confidential support Health Partners On IPV + Exploitation Toolkit for health centers and domestic violence programs	National Domestic Violence Hotline provides confidential, 24/7 support to those impacted by relationship abuse - 1-800-799-SAFE National Sexual Assault Hotline provided 24/7 support for those who have been sexually assaulted or abused - 1-800-656-HOPE	Futures Without Violence safety decision tool for intimate partner violence in English and in Spanish
If our patient is experiencing **financial insecurity**, then we should consider these resources	The Colorado Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) assists Colorado families by paying part of their home heating costs.		2-1-1- service line connects individuals to local services (e.g., diapers or other needs) National Diaper Bank Network connects and supports community-based diaper banks

POSTPARTUM CARE

	State resources	National resources	Patient resources
If our patient needs **postpartum support in their community**, then we should consider these resources	[Colorado Home Visiting Coalition](#) identifies local home visiting programs The [Nurse-Family Partnership Program](#) provides a personal nurse for first-time parents or pregnant moms who meet education and income eligibility	The [4th Trimester Project](#) provides resources and information for families following childbirth [Postpartum Support International](#) provides practical resources, education, and support for postpartum individuals experiencing mental health concerns through a helpline, online support groups, peer mentoring and provider directories.	[Postpartum support plan for new parents](#) is a fill-in guide with sections for visitors, meals, errands, child and pet care, supplies, and communications [My Postpartum Care Checklist](#) helps patients track things to discuss with their OB provider

EMERGENCY CARE SERVICES

	State resources	National resources	Patient resources
If our hospital lacks standardized protocols, training, and awareness for recognizing and responding to **obstetric emergencies in nonobstetric settings**, then we should consider these resources	The [Colorado Safe Transfers Coalition](#) provides best practices for transfers across levels of care during pregnancy and birth Colorado's Perinatal Quick Care Card website with best practices, resources, and clinical algorithms for providers and first responders	[ACOG algorithms](#) for identifying and managing OB emergencies in non-OB settings [AIM OB Emergency Readiness Resource Kit](#) contains best practices, resources, and planning materials that can be used in settings that lack OB services Indian Health Services [OB Readiness in the Emergency Department manual](#) provides checklists, protocols, training curriculum, and resources to be used in the emergency setting [Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO)](#) training program to equip pregnancy care teams with skills to effectively manage OB emergencies [Basic Life Support in Obstetrics (BLSO)](#) training for managing both normal labor and obstetric emergencies	[POST-BIRTH Warning Signs patient handout English](#) and in [Spanish](#)

PATIENT & PROVIDER QUICK REFERENCE MATERIALS

PREGNANCY & POSTPARTUM QUICK CARE CARD

This wallet card is designed to promote continuity of care for patients by keeping essential health details and key contact information readily accessible. Small and portable, it can travel with patients across care settings throughout pregnancy, delivery, and the full first year postpartum.

Pregnancy and the year following birth are times of increased vulnerability to medical complications, mental health conditions, substance use challenges, and interpersonal violence. By clearly identifying someone as pregnant or postpartum, and outlining important warning signs, the card helps non-obstetric providers recognize risk, respond promptly, and connect patients to appropriate treatment and support.

FRONT

BACK

Printable Quick Care Cards ([English](#))
Printable Quick Care Cards ([Spanish](#))

QUICK CARE COLORADO WEBSITE

cpcqc.org/quickcarecolorado

- Quickly access evidence-based algorithms for managing obstetric complications
- Find step-by-step guidance for conditions you may not encounter frequently
- Review educational videos on managing obstetric conditions and complications

PRENATAL & POSTPARTUM QUICK REFERENCES

Mental Health/Substance Use

5Ps Perinatal Substance Use Screen

Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)

Alcohol and Substance Use Screening Questionnaire (AUDIT- C+2)

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)-7

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9)

Colorado PROSPER Psychiatric consultation line

Maternal Warning Signs

Urgent maternal warning signs poster

Postpartum warning signs poster ([English](), [Spanish]())

Pregnancy & Postpartum Quick Care Website

Social Drivers of Health

PRAPARE: Social Drivers Screen

HITS Screening for initmate partner violence

AHC HRSN Health-related social needs screening

Patient Hotlines

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline
1-833-TLC-MAMA

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
988

Resource Access Line
211

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE

Never Use Alone National Overdose Response
1-800-484-3731

Emergency substance abuse hotline
1-800-662-HELP

Postpartum Support International HelpLine
1-800-944-4733