

A network diagram on the left side of the page, featuring several circular nodes connected by thin lines. Some nodes contain icons of people, representing a collaborative network. The background of the entire page is a light, stylized map of Colorado.

Maternal Quality & Safety

Implementation Toolkit for the Colorado Quick Care Card

Colorado Perinatal Care
Quality Collaborative

WHY IS THE COLORADO QUICK CARE CARD NEEDED?

Maternal morbidity and mortality remain urgent public health challenges in Colorado and across the United States. Serious complications can occur during pregnancy and throughout the first year postpartum, often outside traditional obstetric settings. Many individuals seek care in emergency departments, urgent care clinics, or from first responders who may not have immediate access to pregnancy-related health information. Early recognition of warning signs and clear communication across care teams are critical to preventing severe outcomes.

Data from Colorado's [Maternal Mortality Review Committee](#) show that a significant proportion of maternal deaths occur in the postpartum period, frequently outside the birth facility and beyond traditional obstetric care. Nationally, the [CDC](#) reports that approximately 57% of maternal deaths occur between 7 and 365 days postpartum.

The Quick Care Card addresses this gap by ensuring birthing people, first responders, and healthcare teams have shared, easily accessible information at the point of care.

Developed by the [Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative](#), the program includes an alert card with QR codes, educational resources, and key warning signs of pregnancy and postpartum complications. The initiative supports patient safety, continuity of care, and awareness across emergency response systems.

Rural Impact

According to the [March of Dimes](#) 2025 report, 37.5% of Colorado is classified as a maternity care desert, meaning no obstetric providers or services are available. This gap highlights the need for clear communication between patients and non-maternity providers to ensure timely, appropriate care. The Quick Care Card is designed to help bridge that gap.

Authors

Ashlie Gates BSN, RNC-MNN, SPARK Clinical Quality Improvement Advisor,
Kari Ricard MBA HealthCare, SPARK Program Manager

Copyright information: © 2026 Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative. The material in this field guide may be freely reproduced and disseminated for informational, educational, and non-commercial purposes only.

For correspondence: Ashlie Gates or Kari Ricard
Email: agates@cpcqc.org or kricard@cpcqc.org

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS TOOLKIT

WHAT IS THE COLORADO QUICK CARE CARD?

In this section, you will learn why the Colorado Quick Care Card is a valuable tool to healthcare workers and patients

Page 4

COLORADO QUICK CARE CARD & PATIENT RESOURCES

In this section, you will find the Quick Care Card available in a variety of formats. Your team can choose the printing option that is best for your facility.

You will also find handouts to distribute to your patients along with the Quick Care card. This flyer helps patients understand the purpose and functionality of the Quick Care Card.

Page 5

HEALTHCARE TEAM RESOURCES

In this section, you will find flyers and educational tools that you can use to inform your staff about the Quick Care Card and its importance.

Page 6

COLORADO QUICK CARE CARD WEBSITE

In this section, you will find information about the [Quick Care Card website](#) and its uses.

Page 7

RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In this section, you will find helpful recommendations and tools you can use to help implement the Quick Care Card at your site.

Page 8-10

POSTPARTUM ALERT BANDS & TOOLKIT SUMMARY

In this section, you will find information on postpartum alert bands. Your site may choose to implement them in addition to the quick care card.

Page 11

TRANSLATED MATERIALS

In this section, you will find translated versions of all our patient-facing materials.

Page 12

REFERENCE

Page 13

WHAT IS THE COLORADO QUICK CARE CARD?

The Colorado Quick Care Card is designed to support patients and healthcare providers in recognizing and responding to pregnancy and postpartum complications. It serves as a practical tool to improve communication, patient education, and access to critical resources during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Key benefits of providing your patients with the Colorado Quick Care Card include:

- **Equitable** – Low-cost, easy to distribute, and accessible for hospitals across urban, rural, and frontier communities
- **Consistent** – Aligns with familiar medical communication tools such as medication cards, chronic disease action plans, allergy alerts, and blood type cards
- **Comprehensive** – Includes key physical, mental, and behavioral health warning signs related to pregnancy and the postpartum period
- **Action-Oriented** – QR codes link to trusted, up-to-date patient and provider resources for rapid access to additional information and support
- **Portable** – Designed to be kept with a patient’s ID and insurance cards, making it easy to access during any healthcare encounter and supporting continued use beyond the initial 6–12 week postpartum period. Use is recommended for up to 12 months postpartum, when the risk of pregnancy-related mortality remains elevated

By providing the Colorado Quick Care Card to your patients, your team will:

- Standardize education on pregnancy and postpartum warning signs
- Help patients quickly access trusted community resources and support
- Provide healthcare providers with a quick visual cue that a patient is pregnant or postpartum
- Ensure healthcare teams can easily access up-to-date, evidence-based perinatal care protocols

The Colorado Quick Care Card helps strengthen patient safety, communication, and continuity of care throughout pregnancy and the full postpartum year.

Pregnancy & Postpartum Quick Care Card

Keep this card with your ID or insurance card. If you need medical care during pregnancy or in the **first year** after having your baby, please show this card to your doctor, midwife, nurse, or paramedic.

Having a baby can increase risks for medical issues, mental health concerns, substance use, and domestic violence. If something feels off, [trust yourself and get help](#).

My delivery/due date: _____

My doctor or midwife: _____

My nearest emergency room: _____

EMERGENCY CARE PROVIDERS:
Helpful algorithms and information on treating pregnancy & postpartum complications



PARENTS AND FAMILIES:
Important information and support resources during and after pregnancy

Immediately call 911 or go to the Emergency Room for ANY of these issues:

- Chest pain or difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Thoughts of harming yourself or your baby
- Feeling extremely sleepy, weak, or passing out
- Blood pressure higher than 160/110
- Fear for your safety or your baby’s safety

Call or visit your doctor or midwife for these medical concerns:

- Blood pressure higher than 140/90
- Fever higher than 100.4 degrees
- Bleeding that fills a pad in less than 1 hour or clots larger than an egg, when postpartum
- Blurred vision or headache that does not get better with meds, fluids, or rest
- Redness, swelling, heat, discharge, or bad smell in your stitches, vaginal discharge, or breasts
- Any vaginal bleeding when pregnant
- New or uncontrolled pain
- Having trouble pooping or pain when peeing
- Swelling, tenderness, redness, or heat in your legs

Call your doctor, midwife, or therapist/counselor for these mental health concerns:

- Feeling sad, worried, angry, anxious, or guilty. Especially if it makes it hard to sleep, take care of yourself, or your baby
- Using or considering using substances (vaping/cigarettes, marijuana, alcohol, opioids, or other) to cope

PATIENT AND FAMILY RESOURCES

Patients must understand the purpose of the Quick Care Card. Use the resources in this section to educate patients and families on how and when to use it. We recommend distributing the patient flyer alongside the Quick Care Card to reinforce this information.

You will also find several formatting options for printing the Quick Care Card at your facility. Select the version that works best for your team's workflow. If your patient doesn't carry a wallet, suggest they carry the card in their phone case, use the sticker version on their phone case, or save the Colorado Quick Care Card website to their favorites on their phone.

Resource

Documents

Quick Care Card

CPCQC has provided several printing options to best fit the needs of all sites.

You can use these images to print business cards (3.5inx2in) from the printing business of your choosing. Simply upload the image to their business card template and order.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card image front](#)
- [Colorado Quick Care Card image back](#)

You can use this template to print on Avery business cards (3.5inx2in), template 5371.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card business card template.](#)

You can print out this template on cardstock and cut it out yourself.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card fold-over template.](#)

Have a patient who doesn't use a wallet? Print these stickers (Avery template 22565), and put them on phone cases, diaper bags, water bottles, or any item they carry with them often.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card stickers](#)

Translated versions available on page 12

Patient infographic flyers

Please distribute the Colorado Quick Care Card with this flyer. It will help the patient understand the importance and use of the card.

- [Patient-facing Colorado Quick Care Card flyer](#)

Translated versions available on page 12

ED triage sign

Please hang this sign in your ED triage rooms or waiting rooms. This sign will help alert patients to share their current or recent pregnancy with their healthcare team.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card ED sign](#)

Translated versions available on page 12

HEALTHCARE TEAM RESOURCES

It is essential that your staff understand the purpose of the Quick Care Card. Use the resources in this section to educate your staff on what the card is and why it is important.

Resource

Documents

OB staff flyer

Please share this flyer with your OB staff in newsletters, bathrooms, huddles, etc so they understand the importance of this card and how it works

- [OB staff Colorado Quick Care Card flyer](#)

EMS/ED staff flyer

Please share this flyer with your EMS staff in newsletters, bathrooms, huddles, etc so they understand the importance of this card and how it works

- [EMS/ED staff Colorado Quick Care Card flyer](#)



COLORADO QUICK CARE CARD WEBSITE

The [Colorado Quick Care Card website](#) is meant to be a one-stop shop for patients and healthcare teams.

Patients can access this site and receive:

- Quick access to maternal and newborn warning signs
- Connections to [state-wide resources](#) to help support in the postpartum period

Healthcare providers can access this site and receive:

- Quick access to [ACOG protocols](#) and evidence-based recommendations for treating Obstetric complications
- Connections to [helplines](#) to support their patients with mental health and substance use needs

Please take an opportunity to scan the QR code on this page and explore the site and the resources it can provide. It is meant to be a helpful tool for everyone



Quick Care Card website



[WHO WE ARE](#) [WHAT WE DO](#) [EVENTS](#) [GET INVOLVED](#) [INSIGHTS](#) [Q](#)

[DONATE](#)

[DASHBOARDS](#)

IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING A MEDICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.



**QUICK CARE FOR
PREGNANCY AND
POSTPARTUM CONCERNS**

PUTTING THE QUICK CARE CARD INTO PRACTICE

The following pages provide information and resources to support the implementation of the Colorado Quick Care Card at your site. They also include actionable steps to help ensure the card is consistently distributed and that patients receive education on how and when to use it.

How will we educate our team?

- Share in huddles, meetings and email
- Post flyers in work areas
- Include in onboarding or annual education
- Review when and how to use the card

How will we check progress?

Check staff awareness in 3-6 months, then annually

How will patients receive it?

- Decide who gives the card
- Decide when it is given
- Keep cards stocked in key areas
- Add a short script for staff

How will we check progress?

Periodically confirm cards are being handed out as planned

How will we make it accessible?

- Offer in multiple languages
- Use plain language to explain
- Support with interpreter services
- Provide print and digital options

How will we check progress?

Review whether materials are accessible to your patient populations

How will we communicate across care settings?

- Share with local EMS, ED, outpatient and OB teams
- Identify a contact champion in each setting
- Review during cross-team meetings

How will we check progress?

Check in periodically to identify gaps and improve coordination

QUICK CARE CARD ACTION PLAN

Start here:

- Choose where Quick Care Cards will be stored
- Decide who will distribute cards
- Train staff on Quick Care Cards using multiple methods (written, verbal, visual)
- Make materials easy to access
- Share the Quick Care Card with partner teams (ED, EMS, outpatient)
- Check back in 3-6 months to ensure Quick Care Cards are being distributed

Our local plan:

Focus Area	What will we do?	Who?	By when?
Team education			
Patient distribution			
Increase access			
Cross-setting communication			
Evaluate implementation			

Follow-up questions:

- Do staff know what the Quick Care Card is and where to find it?
- Are patients receiving the Quick Care Card consistently?
- Are materials accessible to all patients?
- Do partner teams (EMS, ED, outpatient, OB) know how the Quick Care Card is being use?

QI TOOLS

Quality improvement tools should serve as the foundation for implementing changes, such as the Colorado Quick Care Card. We encourage teams to use these tools to guide planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts to support sustainable and meaningful change. All tools are based on the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](#) model for improvement.

Tool and use	Resource
Aim Statements	<p>Setting an initial aim is essential to starting an improvement initiative. An organization will not improve without a clear and firm intention to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIM worksheet
PDSA	<p>Once a team has identified testable change ideas, the next step is to test them. The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle is a method for learning how the change works in the local environment — by planning it, trying it, observing the results, and acting on what is learned, teams can build their knowledge about the potential of a change to result in improvement in their local context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDSA worksheet
Driver Diagram	<p>A driver diagram is a visual display of a team’s theory of what “drives,” or contributes to, the achievement of a project aim. This clear picture of a team’s shared view is a useful tool for communicating to a range of stakeholders where a team is testing and working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver Diagram worksheet
Sustainability	<p>Once your team has established a process that works, it’s important to ensure this change can last.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability worksheet

POSTPARTUM ALERT BANDS

Postpartum alert bands, such as the [Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses \(AWHONN\) POSTBIRTH Alert Bands](#), are visual safety tools that quickly identify patients at increased risk for serious postpartum complications.

These color-coded wristbands support rapid recognition, standardized communication, and timely escalation across care settings, including triage, the emergency department, and inpatient units.

You may see different versions and colors of these wrist bands. As many sites around Colorado have independently done them as Quality Improvement projects.

CPCQC recommends prioritizing the implementation of the Colorado Quick Care Card first, as it is the most equitable and accessible resource for hospitals of all sizes and resource levels. If teams have the capacity to implement alert bands in addition to the card, we recommend using [AWHONN’s POSTBIRTH Alert bands](#), as they are widely available and nationally recognized.

Using standardized tools, such as the Quick Care Card, helps promote consistency communication, equitable care, and timely response to maternal warning signs.



TOOLKIT SUMMARY

The Colorado Quick Care Card Toolkit is a practical strategy to reduce preventable pregnancy and postpartum morbidity and mortality in Colorado.

By equipping birthing people with clear information about warning signs and connecting emergency providers to concise, actionable guidance, **the initiative strengthens communication at critical moments**—particularly when care occurs outside the birth facility.

Together, these efforts ensure that **no pregnancy or postpartum concern is dismissed, no warning sign is overlooked, and every birthing person has a clearer, safer path to timely care.**

TRANSLATED MATERIALS

Resource

Documents

Quick Care Card

You can use these images to print business cards (3.5inx2in) from the printing business of your choosing. Simply upload the image to their business card template and order.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card image front Spanish](#)
- [Colorado Quick Care Card image back Spanish](#)

You can use this template to print on Avery business cards (3.5inx2in), template 5371.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card business card template Spanish](#)

You can print out this template on cardstock and cut it out yourself. This is the best option when you only need a few cards in a language you don't see often at your site.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card fold-over template Spanish](#)
- [Colorado Quick Care Card fold-over template Cantonese](#)
- [Colorado Quick Care Card fold-over template Mandarin](#)
- [Colorado Quick Care Card fold-over template Vietnamese](#)

Patient infographic flyers

Please distribute the Colorado Quick Care Card with this flyer. It will help the patient understand the importance and use of the card.

- [Patient-facing Colorado Quick Care Card flyer Spanish](#)
- [Patient-facing Colorado Quick Care Card flyer Cantonese](#)
- [Patient-facing Colorado Quick Care Card flyer Mandarin](#)
- [Patient-facing Colorado Quick Care Card flyer Vietnamese](#)

ED triage sign

Please hang this sign in your ED triage rooms or waiting rooms. This sign will help alert patients to share their current or recent pregnancy with their healthcare team.

- [Colorado Quick Care Card ED sign Spanish](#)

REFERENCES

1. Colorado Maternal Health Data – Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Maternal Health Data provides statistics and reports on maternal mortality and morbidity in Colorado, including resources from the Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC). Access detailed data and related reports on maternal deaths and reviews.

URL: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/maternal-mortality-prevention-program/maternal-health-data>

2. Maternal Mortality Review Committees (MMRC) – CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This page outlines the role, purpose, and function of MMRCs in reviewing and preventing pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S., including committee processes and goals for improving maternal health outcomes.

URL: <https://cdc.gov/maternal-mortality/php/data-research/mmrc/index.html>

3. Colorado PeriStats Report – March of Dimes – March of Dimes. State-specific maternal and infant health data for Colorado, including metrics on maternity care access, mortality, morbidity, and other perinatal health indicators.

URL: <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/colorado>

4. Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) – AWHONN. Official site of the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, a leading professional organization focused on improving care for women and newborns through evidence-based practice, education, and advocacy.

URL: <https://www.awhonn.org/>

5. Model for Improvement – Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) – Institute for Healthcare Improvement. Overview of the Model for Improvement, a widely used quality improvement framework that includes the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle, designed to guide systematic improvement efforts in health care and other fields.

URL: <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/maternal-mortality-prevention-program/maternal-health-data>

