



Date: September 30, 2024

To: Chief Nursing Officers and OB Clinical Leaders

From: Tammy Van Dyk, SVP Quality & Patient Safety, TN Center for Patient Safety

RE: Resources and Support for Tennessee Maternal Health Initiatives in Reducing Disparities in Birthing People and Improving Cardiac Care Obstetric Outcomes

THA is pleased to share resources available to assist members in improving staff knowledge and outcomes in maternal health. Tennessee is extremely fortunate to have a strong and well-established perinatal collaborative through the Tennessee Initiative for Perinatal Quality Care (TIPQC). While many of the birthing hospitals have participated in TIPQC projects for years, THA encourages all hospitals with obstetric services to participate and utilize resources available to them.

The first initiative is the [Best for All Learning Collaborative](#). It aims to promote respectful perinatal patient care across all hospital teams. The urgency for the initiative is underscored by persisting care disparities in Tennessee, with non-Hispanic Black women 2.3 times more likely to die from pregnancy complications than white women, and substance use disorder being a major contributor to pregnancy-related deaths. TIPQC is eager to work with Tennessee Hospitals by offering a wealth of resources such as AWHONN's Respectful Maternity Care Framework and toolkit, films highlighting care disparities, monthly expert trainings, coaching, data management, and quality improvement education.

The second new initiative is the [Cardiac Conditions in Obstetric Care Learning Collaborative](#), which aims to increase screening and appropriate referrals across the state for birthing people, thereby reducing Nulliparous Term Singleton Vertex (NTSV) C-sections and preterm delivery rates. This project is essential, because cardiac conditions are the leading cause of pregnancy-related deaths and disproportionately affect non-Hispanic Black people. Nationally, multidisciplinary maternal mortality review committees have found that birthing people who died from cardiac conditions during pregnancy and postpartum were not diagnosed with a cardiovascular disease prior to death. These committees also found that nearly 80% of all pregnancy-related deaths were preventable, regardless of cause. TIPQC will work with hospitals across the state and offer resources such as badge buddies, referral cards, posters, and paper screening forms to get them started on this initiative. Additionally, TIPQC will offer a webinar series on cardiac conditions in pregnancy and postpartum, monthly huddles, coaching, data management, quality improvement education, and virtual office hours. The TN Center for Patient Safety (TCPS) at THA enthusiastically supports TIPQC and Tennessee hospitals as we collectively work to improve maternal care and outcomes across the state. TIPQC stands ready to assist hospital teams in tackling these critical issues. I encourage hospital leaders to support their teams active membership in these new maternal health initiatives.

Please see the information in the project links for additional information on the quality improvement initiatives.

For more information or questions, please contact Tammy Van Dyk, Sr. VP Quality and Patient Safety, at tvandyk@tha.com; Jackie Moreland, Clinical Quality Improvement Specialist, at jmoreland@tha.com; or Brenda Barker, Executive Director, TIPQC at bbarker@tipqc.org.