

Maternal Mortality Efforts in Virginia

Jennifer Macdonald, MPH, BSN, RN
Director, Division of Child & Family Health
Office of Family Health Services
Virginia Department of Health

Eliminate the racial disparity in maternal mortality by 2025

Common Themes Found in Virginia

- 1) Individual, system and structural bias are negatively impacting the healthcare environment & maternal health outcomes
- 2) Healthy pregnancies start with healthy individuals prior to pregnancy
- 3) Women & families want more choices for maternal care providers and a support team
- 4) Certain policies and practices are leading to women being fearful of seeking prenatal & postpartum care
- 5) Need for greater emphasis on mental health & trauma screenings and services in prenatal & postpartum periods
- 6) Solutions must be community-driven & community-specific

Focus Areas for Policy

Insurance Coverage

Healthcare Environment

Criminal Justice and Child Welfare Response

Community Based Services

Contraception

Data Collection

MCH Title V Strategies

- Maternal Mortality Review Team (MMRT)
- Family Planning
- Pregnancy loss support
- Breastfeeding Friendly Designation program for maternity centers, businesses and early care education centers
- Healthy Beginnings (AMCHP) Advancing Anti-Racism in Preterm Birth Prevention
- Citymatch Alignment for Action Learning Collaborative
- MCH Workforce Development

Maternal Mortality Review Team

Codified in 2019

Housed in the Office of Chief Medical Examiner with multiple funding resources

2019 [Report](#): Chronic Disease in Virginia Pregnancy Associated Deaths, 1999-2012: Need for Coordination of Care on Chronic Conditions

Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC)

Focus is on quality improvement and assurance to improve maternal and infant outcomes

- Hospitals, obstetric and neonatal providers
- Enhance the quality of state-wide perinatal data
- To inform and involve the community providers
- Decrease preterm birth rate, length of stay and maternal mortality rates
- Narrow the racial and ethnic disparities
- Current projects involve 4th trimester services and care of the mother/baby dyad affected by substance abuse

Injury and Violence Prevention

- Federal funding to addressing maternal mortality due to homicide and suicide
- Project Connect
 - Training program to asses, address and refer
 - Reduction of intimate partner violence, inclusive of sexual violence
- Project ECHO®
 - Education on safe prescribing practices, case management in highly complex cases, inclusive of pregnant and postpartum birthing persons

Home Visiting

Over 56 local programs in Virginia

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting
(MIECHV)

Healthy Start

Resource Mothers

Virginia's Comprehensive Health Investment Project
(CHIP)

Data Collection

Standardized health data a priority

Robust cross-sector partnerships to cut the red tape
between state agencies, organizations

Maternal Health Data Taskforce

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

Needs Assessments – MCH, Home Visiting

Medicaid Benefits

Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) Prenatal Coverage

- Effective July 1, 2022, pregnant individuals eligible regardless of immigration status
- Through 60 days postpartum

12-month Postpartum Extension

- Effective July 22, 2022
- Maintains original benefits available and include breastfeeding support, behavioral health services, and dental



Doula Certification and Benefit

Legislative mandate and collaborative effort across state agencies and paraprofessional network

Certification process led by VA Department of Health (VDH)

April 2022, Virginia approved the first state-certified community doula

Reimbursement process led by Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)

May 2022, Virginia Medicaid enrolled the first state community doula as a Medicaid Provider

Doula Task Force



Community Doula Benefit Implementation

Virginia Medicaid is the 4th state in the nation to implement doula services for Medicaid members.

The Community Doula program is committed to maternal and infant health and is working to build a network of Medicaid doula providers. The program is focusing efforts on outreach, engagement and recruitment.

To date:

58 doulas have received state certification

Of the 58 doulas that have received state certification:

18 doulas are pending Medicaid enrollment

26 doulas are Medicaid approved and have completed contracting with 2 or more of the health care plans

First 2 doula visits on 8/30/2022

4 doula-supported births

Community Doula Benefit Implementation

Unanticipated Challenges

Doula Recruitment and Network Adequacy

Understanding of Doula Implementation Timeframe

Administrative requirements

Claims and Reimbursement

Financial Requirements and Workforce Development

Measures of Success

Support from all six MCOs/Health Care Plans

Partnership & Collaboration (VDH, DMAS and MCOs)

State & Local doula resource

Communication and agreement between state agencies and doulas (i.e., recommendation form)

Doula Reflections & Lessons Learned

Take into account the administrative capacity required for doula hubs in reimbursement rates

Address continuing education requirements for certification (bridge)

Focus on ways to engage doulas on a larger scale pre-implementation

Hold onboarding sessions (state certification, Medicaid onboarding and credentialing)

Provider, hospital hesitancy (ongoing communication with providers and hospitals)

Training costs and accessibility (engage doula training agencies in the implementation)

Foundation and structure - address to help grow the benefit and accessibility

Ongoing support for all (MCO, DMAS, Public Health, Hospitals, Providers, Doulas)

Communication Strategy - address all levels

Looking Forward...Virginia's 2023 General Assembly session

Perinatal Hubs?

Fetal & Infant Mortality Review (FIMR)?

Expansion of MIECHV (Home Visiting) state dollars?

Mental health support to persons of reproductive age?

THANK YOU