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Colorado Hospitals Team Up with Physicians, Nurse Midwives and Nurse Practitioners to Improve Health of Newborns in Colorado

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation provides more than \$580,000 to fund new collaboration with Colorado Hospital Association, March of Dimes Colorado and the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative

GREENWOOD VILLAGE, COLO. – April 22, 2015 – A new collaboration with Colorado hospitals and obstetrics (OB) providers such as physicians, nurse midwives and nurse practitioners, has launched to reduce the incidence of preterm births and low-birthweight deliveries across the state. This two-year “Safe Deliveries Colorado” initiative was created in partnership by the Colorado Hospital Association (CHA), Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Colorado, the March of Dimes Colorado/Wyoming Chapter and the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative.

Preterm birth is currently the most significant challenge to maternal-child health in the United States. It complicates one in nine deliveries and accounts for more than 85 percent of all infant mortality. Infants who are born preterm are at greater risk of dying in their first year of life. Of those who survive, there is an increased risk of repeated hospital admissions and adverse outcomes, including cerebral palsy and long-term disability, creating a lifetime of challenges for the infants affected and difficulties for families and communities.

“The Safe Deliveries Colorado initiative is an essential step in improving the health of newborns in our state and represents an important commitment to population health,” said Steven Summer, CHA president and CEO. “Engaging our hospital and obstetrics communities gives us an opportunity to implement best practices and interventions that have been shown to delay early delivery and reduce infant morbidity.”

The Safe Deliveries Colorado collaborative aims to achieve the following goals:

- Reduce low-birthweight deliveries to no more than 7.8 percent of live births
- Reduce preterm births to no more than 9.6 percent of live births

All 51 Colorado hospitals that provide birthing services are being invited and encouraged to participate in the collaborative, along with OB and family practice health care providers from across the state. CHA will provide education, quality improvement resources and data analytics to support the providers and hospitals in this important work. Hospitals will have the opportunity to network with each other and share best practices.

“Health care costs for premature babies are nearly 12 times as high compared to babies born without complications, according to the March of Dimes,” said Mike Ramseier, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Colorado. The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation is providing more than \$580,000 to make the project possible. “The impact of prematurity doesn’t end at birth – babies who survive often face a lifetime of health challenges. Through the Safe Deliveries Colorado initiative, we hope to help babies develop full term and lead healthier lives.”

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, Colorado preterm birth rates were highest for African-American infants (13.2 percent), followed by Asians (11.3 percent), Hispanics (11.2 percent), Native Americans (10.8 percent) and Caucasians (9.7 percent) in 2012. Because of this, the Safe Deliveries Colorado collaborative will also focus attention on improving birth outcomes and reducing health disparities among minority populations.

“We are excited to be involved with this project to reduce the incidence of preterm births across our state,” said Dr. Steven Holt, OBGYN and chairman of the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative. “Our collaborative will reach out to our multiple stakeholder members of our statewide organization to assist with education and data collection and will provide content experts to help design and direct this work.”

“Many factors contribute to preterm birth and low-birthweight babies,” said Scott Matthews, director of program services for the March of Dimes Colorado/Wyoming chapter. “Giving every baby a healthy start in life requires our focused and collective efforts, and we have to address this complex problem and reduce our state’s childbirth disparities.”

About the Colorado Hospital Association

The Colorado Hospital Association (CHA) represents 100 member hospitals and health systems throughout Colorado. CHA partners with its members to work towards health reform and performance improvement, and provides advocacy and representation at the state and federal level. Colorado hospitals and health systems are committed to providing coverage and access to safe, high-quality and affordable health care. In addition, Colorado hospitals have a tremendous impact on the state’s economic stability and growth, contributing to nearly every community with more than 75,000 employees statewide. For more information, visit www.cha.com.

About Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Colorado

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