



RESEARCH BRIEF:

Maternal Health Quality Improvement in Colorado Hospitals

In the fall of 2023, CHA's Center for Clinical Leadership and Excellence (CCLE) and the Colorado Perinatal Care Quality Collaborative (CPCQC) surveyed every hospital labor and delivery (L&D) unit in the state to collect insight into the quality improvement (QI) work being done. The survey was completed by 100% of L&D units in the state, and valuable feedback was also gained from focus groups done with 14 hospitals.

Background:

- Maternal mortality is rising in Colorado. From 2016-2020, there were **174 pregnancy-associated deaths** in Colorado – **90% of them were preventable.**¹
- Severe maternal morbidity is also a challenge – CHA data indicate that more than **1,300 patients** giving birth in 2022 **experienced a severe complication.**
- Many factors that contribute to maternal morbidity and mortality extend beyond the walls of the hospital, but **increasing rates of complications** show an important opportunity for hospitals to be included in community initiatives.

Top Survey Takeaways:

More than 90%	of L&D units are working on addressing the most common causes of morbidity and mortality.	85%	of L&D units report participation in a program offered by CPCQC.	92%	of L&D units are directly represented on hospital-wide quality committees.
92%	of L&D units collect and analyze patient experience data.	Approximately 75%	of L&D units track hospital-specific rates of severe morbidity.	Just under half	of L&D units stratify outcomes by race, ethnicity, and social determinants of health.

When it comes to L&D quality work:

What helps?

- Multidisciplinary teams to support QI implementation and spread the work equitably.
- Standardized tools and frameworks to support a universal approach across all Colorado L&D units.
- Dedicated staff time for data collection, analysis, and submission.

What hurts?

- Workforce issues, including staff turnover.
- Inability to easily share data across technology platforms.
- Balancing QI activities with demands of frontline care delivery.

Next Steps:

- To amplify the impact for patients, the future of L&D quality improvement includes:
 - The standardized rollout of QI bundles statewide,
 - Enhanced data integration to inform QI efforts, and
 - Training and technical help for hospital staff.
- CHA and CPCQC's efforts will continue to support Colorado L&D units in their efforts to reduce disparities in maternal care.

¹ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1L8YyFzO7MUKJuG17p2qa1O8mwTz_PR4T/view

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