

November 6, 2018

## **Better Health for Mothers and Babies: Working Together to Improve Maternal Safety and Outcomes**

### **At Issue:**

Maternal health is a top priority for AHA and its member hospitals and health systems. That is why the AHA is proud to be a member of the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM), a national data-driven maternal safety and quality improvement initiative based on proven implementation approaches to improving maternal safety and outcomes in the U.S.

This advisory is the **second in a series** to assist the field as it builds upon its efforts to safeguard mothers and babies by reducing maternal mortality.

While hospitals and physicians have worked hard to improve outcomes, we must continue to pursue advancements in maternal care. We recognize that mothers are at risk from the first days of pregnancy through the postpartum period, and hospitals and their community partners can do more to improve their care.

In the initial advisory, we highlighted efforts to:

- Reaffirm or establish a hospital/system-wide commitment to improving maternal outcomes.
- Review internal data and look for opportunities to improve outcomes.
- Review care practices and communications at discharge or transition and throughout the postpartum period.
- Regularly review data with the care team, including executives, physicians and nurses.
- Recommit to evidence-based clinical practices, such as those highlighted through the [AIM program](#), to address the leading causes of maternal risk.
- Prioritize and implement targeted strategies to combat known risk factors, including the mother's age, obesity, inadequate prenatal care, substance use and any known care disparities.
- Work with like-minded, community-based organizations to improve public information and education about how to prevent and treat the leading causes of maternal harm.

### **AHA Work:**

The AHA intends to be an active partner with hospitals and health systems, working to highlight best practices and urging field adoption of those practices that are most effective in reducing maternal harm. This multi-pronged effort, which we are calling Better Health for Mothers and Babies, aims to:

- Provide the latest best practices through a new website – <https://www.aha.org/better-health-for-mothers-and-babies> – that houses case studies, tools and resources on the full continuum of care – prenatal, in hospital and post-partum – to hospitals and health systems.
- Provide a forum for hospitals and health systems to engage in sharing best practices through outreach, webinars, interviews with innovative leaders and other networking methods.
  - On Nov. 13 at 2 p.m. ET, the AHA in collaboration with our American Organization of Nurse Executives (AONE) and the AHA Physician Alliance, will host the first in a new series of webinars for members on improving maternal health and reducing maternal mortality. [Click here to learn more and register for the webinar.](#)
- Convene national summit of key stakeholders to share leading practices and identify collaborative actions across the full continuum of care.
- Engage the association's full membership through collaborations with AHA's Physician Alliance, AONE, Institute for Diversity and Health Equity, the Health Research & Educational Trust and AHA Center for Health Innovation.

To further support the field's efforts and data collection, the AHA is [urging](#) final passage of legislation to establish maternal mortality review committees in all states: S. 1112, the Maternal Health Accountability Act of 2017, as amended and passed by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in July, and the discussion draft version of the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act of 2018 (H.R. 1318).

The legislation is an important part of efforts to reduce maternal mortality in the U.S. It provides federal funding for state efforts to develop maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs) to better understand maternal complications and identify solutions. While some states and cities already have established MMRCs, participation by all states will allow for the collection of additional data that will aid in better understanding the causes of maternal mortality and ways to improve treatment.

### **Further Questions:**

In launching the Better Health for Mothers and Babies initiative, we are asking that you share your best practices with us so that we can highlight them with the field. You can do so by contacting Bonnie Connors Jellen, director of AHA's Section for Maternal & Child Health, at [bjellen@aha.org](mailto:bjellen@aha.org) or 202-626-3751; Jay Bhatt, D.O., AHA senior vice president and chief medical officer, at [jbhatt@aha.org](mailto:jbhatt@aha.org) or 312-422-2262; or Robyn Begley, R.N., AONE chief executive officer and AHA chief nursing officer, at [rbegley@aha.org](mailto:rbegley@aha.org) or 312-422-2824.