

Overview of the CMCS Maternal and Infant Health Initiative

About the Initiative

Nearly two out of three adult women enrolled in Medicaid are in their reproductive years (ages 19 to 44), and Medicaid currently finances about 48 percent of all births in the United States. In July 2014, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a new initiative to improve maternal and infant health outcomes.¹ The initiative is designed to (1) improve the rate and content of postpartum visits in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and (2) increase the number of births that are intended (see box).

The initiative builds on the efforts of CMS's Expert Panel on Improving Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Medicaid and CHIP.² The Expert Panel was convened to explore program policy and reimbursement opportunities that could result in better care, improve birth outcomes, and reduce the costs of care for mothers and infants in Medicaid and CHIP.

The Maternal and Infant Health Initiative is designed to support state, provider, and beneficiary efforts to achieve CMS's goals and is comprised of four key components:

- Collaborating with states to promote coverage of women before and after pregnancy.
- Strengthening technical assistance to promote policies that enhance provider service delivery.
- Expanding beneficiary engagement in their care through enhanced outreach.
- Partnering with other federal agencies including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Population Affairs, and the Health Resources and Services Administration.

¹ <http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Quality-of-Care/Downloads/Maternal-and-Infant-Health-Initiative.pdf>

² <http://www.medicaid.gov/Medicaid-CHIP-Program-Information/By-Topics/Quality-of-Care/Downloads/Expert-Panel-Members-Updated.pdf>

Goals of the Maternal and Infant Health Initiative

To promote healthier outcomes among Medicaid and CHIP enrollees, CMCS established national maternal and infant health goals. These goals are to:

- Increase by 10 percentage points the rate of postpartum visits among pregnant women in Medicaid and CHIP in at least 20 states over a 3-year period
- Increase by 15 percentage points the use of effective contraception among women enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP in at least 20 states over a 3-year period

The following activities highlight the range of CMS's activities to build system capacity to improve maternal and infant health outcomes:

- Convening an Action Learning Series with 11 states to help them test changes designed to improve the rate of postpartum care visits among Medicaid/CHIP enrollees.
- Implementing Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns to: (1) test ways across all payers to reduce early elective deliveries that lack medical indication; and (2) test and evaluate models of enhanced prenatal care for Medicaid and CHIP enrollees to reduce preterm births and decrease the cost of medical care during pregnancy, delivery, and the first year of life.
- Developing state capacity to link state Medicaid claims, vital records, and other data in order to monitor key maternal and infant health indicators.
- Implementing and evaluating a three-year mobile health pilot project in four states to assess the effectiveness of health text messages to provide pregnant women and new mothers with health information and local resources.

For Further Information

More information about the CMCS Maternal and Infant Health Initiative is available at: <http://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid-chip-program-information/by-topics/quality-of-care/maternal-and-infant-health-care-quality.html>.