

RAISING THE BAR FOR MATERNAL HEALTH IN NEW JERSEY

New Jersey is working to improve the quality of maternal infant health care. Efforts across health systems have included hospitals, doctors, nurses, community groups, and government. Teams are working to help with access to care and improve the quality of maternity care. For example, there are several initiatives to lower c-section rates and reduce avoidable harm.

Even though progress has been made, there is more to do to make sure that everyone receives good care. Reducing gaps and improving outcomes for all is crucial. In New Jersey, Black birthing people are **7** times more likely to die from pregnancy-related problems than White birthing people.¹ Black babies are **3** times more likely to die before their first birthday.² For Hispanic birthing people and babies, they are 3.5 and nearly 1.5 times more likely to die.



A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CARE FOR ALL BIRTHING PEOPLE AND BABIES

[Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Excellence and Equity \(RTB\)](#) is a framework for health care systems. It defines four roles that they play as providers of care, employers, community partners, and advocates. Each role calls out actions that will reduce disparities and advance care, experiences, and outcomes.

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute will work with two hospitals to apply RTB strategies. These two hospitals will receive guidance as they work towards creating long-lasting changes. The initiative will focus on three key activities:

MATERNAL HEALTH BENCHMARKING

Hospitals will take part in a review of their maternal services, birth experiences, and outcomes. This assessment will provide insights on current maternal health progress. It will also identify areas for further action.

A SHARED DECISION-MAKING PROGRAM

[TeamBirth](#) is an evidence-based, shared decision-making program. It involves team huddles and other tools used during childbirth. These tools improve how health care providers communicate and ensures respectful care. The program serves as a foundation for culture change within hospital systems.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Health systems and community members will create hospital Perinatal Community Advisory Boards (PCAB). They will share valuable experiences and ideas to improve care and community-based supports. PCABs will work closely with hospital teams to support their success in RTB activities.

¹ [New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey Maternal Mortality Report 2016-2018](#)

² [New Jersey State Health Assessment Data \(NJSHAD\), Health Indicator Report of Infant Mortality Rate](#)

For more information about this [initiative](#), please contact Adelisa Perez-Hudgins at aperez@njhcqi.org. Thank you to [the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) for their generous support of this work.