



RAISING THE BAR FOR MATERNAL HEALTH IN NEW JERSEY

New Jersey is working to improve the care moms and babies receive during and after pregnancy. Efforts across health systems have included hospitals, doctors, nurses, community groups, and government. For example, the state has several initiatives to lower c-section rates.

Much progress has been made. But there is still more to do to make sure that everyone receives good care. In New Jersey and across the U.S., there are big differences in the health of mothers and babies based on race and ethnicity. These differences occur across income and education levels.

A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CARE FOR ALL BIRTHING PEOPLE AND BABIES

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute partnered with Capital Health Medical Center Hopewell and Penn Medicine Princeton Medical Center to launch "Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence." This two-year initiative aims to improve birth equity, outcomes, and experiences.

This initiative is one of the first in the country to apply recommendations from the National Partnership for Women and Families' guide, Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Excellence and Equity: Actionable Strategies for Healthcare Systems. The guide recognizes that health care institutions can play a key part in improving the nation's maternal health crisis. They can help advance respectful and equitable maternal health care through **four important roles** they play.

FOUR IMPORTANT ROLES:

1. **Providers of Care**
2. **Employers**
3. **Community Partners**
4. **Advocates**



THE QUALITY INSTITUTE'S PILOT FOCUSES ON THE ROLE OF HOSPITALS AS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS - THE PILOT CENTERS AROUND THREE KEY ACTIVITIES:

Maternal Health Benchmarking at the Hospitals

Each hospital completed a thorough review of its maternal health services, outcomes, and birth experiences. It includes services such as infant feeding support, mental health resources, midwifery and doula care, and social supports. This review helped the hospitals understand what is working well and areas to focus on.

Adopting a Shared Decision-Making Model of Care

The hospitals are implementing TeamBirth. The model uses structured huddles to improve how health care providers communicate with birthing people. The approach involves the full care team, including the person giving birth, and ensures respectful care. The Quality Institute leads TeamBirth NJ in partnership with Ariadne Labs.

Creating a Perinatal Community Advisory Board (PCAB) at Each Hospital

These boards include people who have given birth at each hospital, local leaders, social service providers, and community health workers. These Boards are unique in New Jersey. They aim to build community trust, serving as a bridge between the hospital and the community. Board members help inform hospital policies and services to create sustainable change.

The hospitals receive guidance from the Quality Institute as they work toward improving birth equity and creating change. Other health care institutions seeking to advance maternal infant health care are encouraged to review the Raising the Bar guide. To learn more about this initiative, please contact Adelisa Perez-Hudgins, Director of Quality, Quality Institute, at aperez@njhcqi.org.

Thank you to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for their generous support of this work.