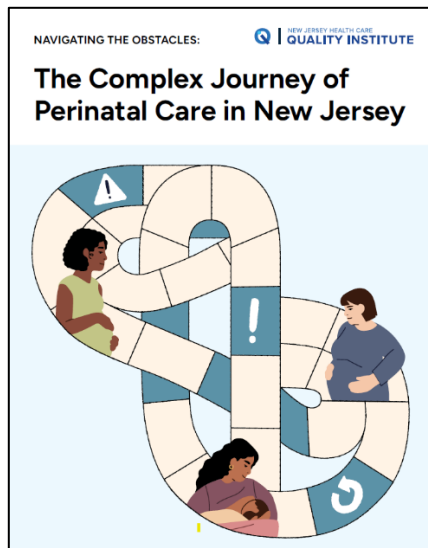


Navigating Obstacles: The Complex Journey of Perinatal Care in New Jersey



In this new report, the **New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute** examines challenges in perinatal care access across insurance markets in New Jersey, highlighting coverage gaps and disparities through three patient case studies. Funded by the Community Health Acceleration Project (CHAP), NJ Birth Equity Funders Alliance (NJBEFA), and the Community Foundation of New Jersey (CFNJ), this report offers recommendations to improve maternal and infant health and advance birth equity.

Access to comprehensive perinatal care—encompassing prenatal, labor, delivery, and postpartum care—varies significantly by insurance type. This report identifies systemic barriers and provides actionable reforms to ensure equitable care.

Call to Action

New Jersey stands at a crossroads in its effort to promote maternal and infant health and advance birth equity. Key recommendations include:

1. **Expand Coverage for the Supplemental Prenatal and Contraceptive Program (SPCP):**

- Add prescription drug benefits for pregnancy-related conditions and behavioral health services.
- Include comprehensive dental coverage and social needs benefits, such as transportation assistance.
- Extend postpartum care to support maternal health beyond childbirth.

2. **Increase Access to Doula Services:**

- Mandate doula service coverage across all state-regulated insurance plans.
- Invest in funding and training for doulas, particularly in underserved areas, and broaden credentialing criteria to increase workforce supply.

3. **Enhance Behavioral Health Integration:**

- Standardize behavioral health benefits across all insurance programs, including SPCP.

- Promote integrated care models of care where physical, behavioral, and SUD support are supported through integrated licensure, regulations, and payment.

4. Improve Postpartum Coverage:

- Ensure access to comprehensive postpartum care, including mental health support, SUD care, chronic disease management, preventive screenings, and ongoing social support.

5. Strengthen Awareness of Dental Care During Pregnancy:

- Implement outreach programs for providers and pregnant individuals to highlight the importance of oral health for maternal and infant well-being.

Through coordinated policy reform and targeted investment, New Jersey can transform perinatal care delivery into a system that ensures every individual, regardless of socioeconomic status or insurance coverage, receives equitable, high-quality care during one of life's most vulnerable phases.