

Comprehensive Maternity Care: Defining a Shared Standard

The Comprehensive Maternity Care Workgroup, a purchaser-led initiative of the Purchaser Business Group on Health, has articulated attributes to define Comprehensive Maternity Care which ensures high-quality, equitable maternal and infant health outcomes. This definition of Comprehensive Maternity Care includes current industry standards, aspirational targets and areas for development. Childbirth is a physiologic/natural process, and maternity care and services should be guided by affordable, patient-focused polices and should not be overmedicalized.

Attributes



Person- and family-centered

Care is designed around the needs and priorities of patients and families, encourages patient and family participation in improvement efforts and incorporates feedback. Patients share preferences and goals of treatment, engage in shared decision-making with their care team and should be made to feel their choices are respected and integrated into care plans. Patients are educated by their care team on their care options to ensure their preferences are fully informed.



Relationship-based

Patients choose a maternity care provider who best meets their needs and have access to providers who share demographic characteristics as it relates to self-reported race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender identity. Patients consistently communicate with (using their preferred means of communication) and receive care from their selected maternity care provider and supporting care team members, who work collaboratively with the patient, their family and their extended care team to build trusting relationships.



Accessible

Patients get high-value care with the right provider and care team in the right setting at the right price. Accessible care includes same-day care for urgent needs through in-person and virtual services with their care team, care provider availability after appointment hours, secure messaging with the team and an online medical record. Patients should be educated on all maternity provider types, and each provider should leverage evidence-based best practices (labor support including movement, caloric intake, allowing sufficient time, etc.) to reduce the need for interventions such as labor induction and C-sections.



Team-based

Patients receive care from a primary maternity care provider, such as an OBGYN, midwife or family medicine doctor, who is supported by and supports members of an interdisciplinary care team, such as doulas, mental health specialists, maternal fetal medicine specialists, lactation consultants, pediatricians, family planning specialists, primary care providers or community health workers. Under the direction of the maternity care provider, care team members communicate and coordinate to address patients' needs and provide care appropriate to their training and expertise.



Integrated

Patients' physical, mental and social needs are assessed, screened and communicated across their maternity, pediatric and primary care teams and with other care providers and settings. Care teams reach out proactively to identify and address patients' care needs and to offer additional support for patients at high or rising risk. Health information and care activities outside of the maternity care team are integrated into patients' care plans.



Coordinated

Patients are guided through care transitions between hospitals or birth centers, specialty care and their maternity care teams. Patients can navigate across settings with established referral pathways to high-value specialty providers with whom the maternity care team exchanges information and coordinates care.



Equitable

Patients receive and experience care services and health outcomes that do not vary in quality or access due to personal characteristics, such as self-reported race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or gender identity. Maternity care teams proactively monitor their care to identify, eliminate and prevent disparities in the care experience and health outcomes.



Accountable

The performance of maternity providers and their provider partners is measured and incentivized to ensure optimal maternal and infant outcomes are achieved. Measurement includes access to care, physical and mental health outcomes, patient-reported outcomes and experience and stratification by self-reported race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender identity.



Whole-person wellbeing

Maternity care should focus not just on the maternity episode but also consider other factors, including social determinants of health, to promote health and treat diseases. Maternity providers should coordinate with primary care, mental health specialists and social services to provide special consideration for high-risk patients with mental health needs and/or substance use disorders. Comprehensive maternity care includes restoring health, promoting resilience and preventing diseases in the lives of the birth participant, children and supporting spouse/family.

For more information about PBGH's Maternity Care programs and initiatives, visit our [website](#).