

Improving Maternal Health to Lessen Potential Risk

Question

According to 2017-2019 data compiled from maternal mortality review committees (MMRCs), more than 80 percent of pregnancy-related deaths in the United States were preventable.¹ What are some recommendations for healthcare organizations to reduce the number of pregnancy-related deaths and improve maternal health?

Answer

Maternal morbidity and mortality are serious concerns in the United States. To better address these concerns, healthcare organizations and providers can implement the following strategies:

- **Build connections between birthing professionals and healthcare organizations.** All parties in the birthing process should be encouraged to communicate. Open communication helps everyone feel respected and part of the team. The goal is to create the best birthing experience possible, and collaborating as a team will foster this goal.
- **Actively participate in the collection of meaningful morbidity and mortality data (including “near misses”) and the development of evidence-based solutions.** Participation in MMRCs supports the collection of valuable data to promote maternal health. These committees, which meet at the state or local level to review deaths during or within 1 year of pregnancy, seek to understand the circumstances surrounding each death so they can devise recommendations for action to prevent deaths in the future.

Read more about MMRCs on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage, [State Strategies for Preventing Pregnancy-Related Deaths: A Guide for Moving Maternal Mortality Review Committee Data to Action](#), as well as in the *Health Affairs* article, [Beyond the Preventing Maternal Deaths Act: Implementation and Further Policy Change](#).

- **Use a health equity framework.** Develop measures to support health equity work, including collecting race, ethnicity, and language (REAL) data. To develop and maintain a health equity framework, consult the instructions in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's white paper on [Achieving Health Equity: A Guide for Health Care Organizations](#).
- **Have a system in place to identify families in need of additional resources and support.** Collect and trend data to identify patients/families who may need help due to homelessness, lack of nutritional food, and other factors affecting their health and well-being. Collecting data can help support the case to strengthen the public health infrastructure.

Resources

For more information, see MedPro's [Risk Resources: Maternal Morbidity and Mortality](#).

Endnotes

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, September 19). *Four in 5 pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. are preventable*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/p0919-pregnancy-related-deaths.html

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