Overview of Maternal Health Issues in Texas

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Maternal Health in Texas

Improving maternal health and infant health are top priorities in Texas

- 4th highest birth rate in U.S.
  - Medicaid pays for more than half of births in state
- Tied with New Mexico for the 4th highest teen birth rate in U.S.
- 34.6 percent of women report their pregnancy was unintended
- Racial disparities exist in infant and maternal mortality rates

Maternal Health in Texas

Positive maternal and birth outcomes depend on a woman's health before and during pregnancy

- Texas has seen an increase in pre-pregnancy obesity, maternal diabetes, and maternal hypertension during the past decade
- In 2016, only 65.1 percent of Texas mothers entered prenatal care within the first trimester
- The rates of preterm births and infants with a low birth weight are higher in Texas than nationally

Better Birth Outcomes Initiatives

To ensure a continued focus on infant and maternal health, HHSC leads the Better Birth Outcomes (BBO) workgroup, in collaboration with DSHS

- BBO initiatives seek to meet a woman's health care needs impacting her ability to have a healthier pregnancy and baby
- BBO focuses on the life course perspective, providing services and care to families during the preconception and interconception period through the prenatal and postpartum periods

Better Birth Outcomes Initiatives

BBO currently has over 30 initiatives focused on infant and maternal health

- Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies
- Healthy Texas Women Waiver
- Infant Mortality
- Long Acting Reversible Contraception
- Maternal Mortality and Morbidity
- Outreach and Education
- Perinatal Advisory Council
- Peripartum Substance Use Studies
- Postpartum Depression Research
- Texas NICU Project
- Zika
- 17P Therapy

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Healthy Families

There are dramatic disparities in access to family planning and prenatal care in Texas

- To address these disparities, the Healthy Families Project was launched in 2016
- The goal is to increase access to family planning services and decrease the risk for infant mortality among Black and Hispanic women by providing communities with flexible resources they can use to implement customized health care interventions within a health equity awareness framework
- Two focus sites: Hidalgo County focuses on Hispanic women while Smith County focuses on Black women

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Hospital Levels of Care

Maternal and neonatal levels of care designations are anticipated to improve health outcomes by promoting care in the most appropriate setting

- The Perinatal Advisory Council develops and recommends criteria for designating levels of neonatal and maternal care, including specifying the minimum requirements to qualify for each level designation and a process for the assignment of levels of care to a hospital
- The neonatal levels of care designation rules became effective in June 2016, and the maternal levels of care designation rules became effective in March 2018

Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)

LARCs are highly effective for preventing pregnancy, easy to use, and last for several years

- Over the past few years, HHSC has updated its LARC reimbursement policy in its Medicaid and women's health programs to increase access
- State efforts to increase access have included the release of the Texas LARC Toolkit, a LARC quick course launched by Texas Health Steps, and state participation on several national collaboratives
- HHSC holds bi-monthly meetings with LARC stakeholders

Upcoming Reports

The following reports are due December 1, 2018:

- SB 17, 85th Legislature, 1st Called Session, 2017
  - Report on pregnancy-related deaths, severe maternal morbidity, and postpartum depression
- Maternal and Neonatal Health, Rider 40, SB 1, 85th Legislature, Regular Session, 2017
  - HHSC must identify opportunities for decreasing NICU costs in Medicaid and CHIP through better care coordination and utilization of services provided by BBO initiatives
  - Additionally, HHSC must identify strategies to increase prevention of neonatal abstinence syndrome and reduce maternal mortality