

2026-2030

Strategic Plan

Research • Innovation • Policy

Strengthening the systems that support every mother.

First shared Feb 2026

Updated June 2026



POLICY CENTER
FOR Maternal Mental Health

*We believe in a U.S. healthcare system that **routinely detects** and **effectively treats** maternal mental health disorders*

Every Mother, Every Time



POLICY CENTER
FOR Maternal Mental Health

www.policycentermmh.org



To close gaps in maternal mental health care so behavioral health is integrated into U.S. maternity care.

Vision

All pregnant & postpartum mothers have ready access to standardized, evidence-based maternal mental health screening, diagnosis, intervention, supports and treatment from providers they respect & trust.

Mission

Values

- Innovation & Creativity**
- Courageousness & Urgency**
- Collaboration & Partnership**
- Empathy & Understanding**
- Excellence & High Performance**



policy

A rule or plan of action, adopted and followed by a group, organization or government

Field Catalyst

“Field catalysts work to galvanize cross-sector players around an issue for equitable systems change toward a shared goal, teasing out best practices and improving outcomes in the field.”

*The Policy Center works in maternal health, mental health, and at the intersection.
Because this work sits within the larger health delivery system, we also catalyze
change in health policy more broadly.*

*Maternal
Health*

**MATERNAL
MENTAL
HEALTH**

*Mental
Health*

HEALTH POLICY

Maternal Health

Enabling effective prenatal and postpartum care, which impacts MMH

Address the implementation of the unbundling of maternity care, and paying OB providers based on claims submissions for services, including impacts on:

- Postpartum care (as the artificial 6-week OB visit cut-off disappears)
 - Implications for when/if postpartum care transitions back to the PCP
- Using claims data to monitor whether OB care is being provided according to guidelines
- Addressing low OB reimbursement compared to other medical specialties (“payment parity”)

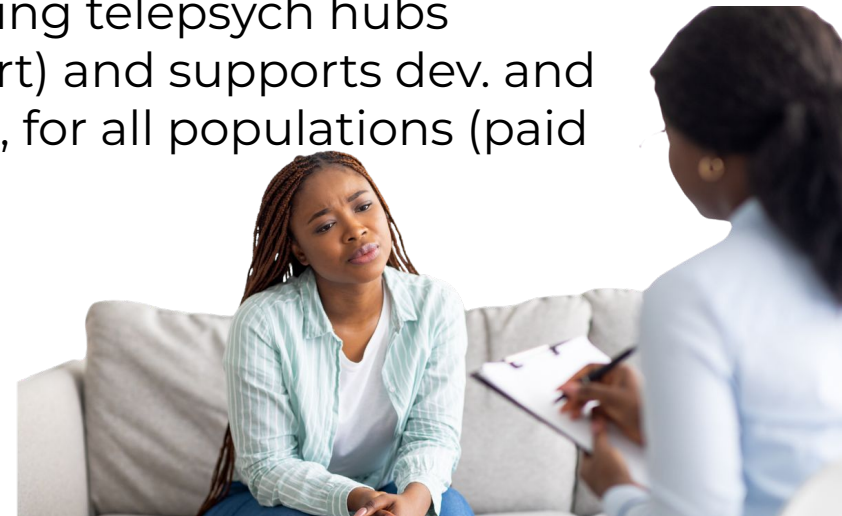
Pushing for Expansion of Health Insurer High Risk Pregnancy Case Management programs to include High Risk Postpartum Care Coordination
(Supporting OBs and patients accessing the right care at the right time)



Mental Health

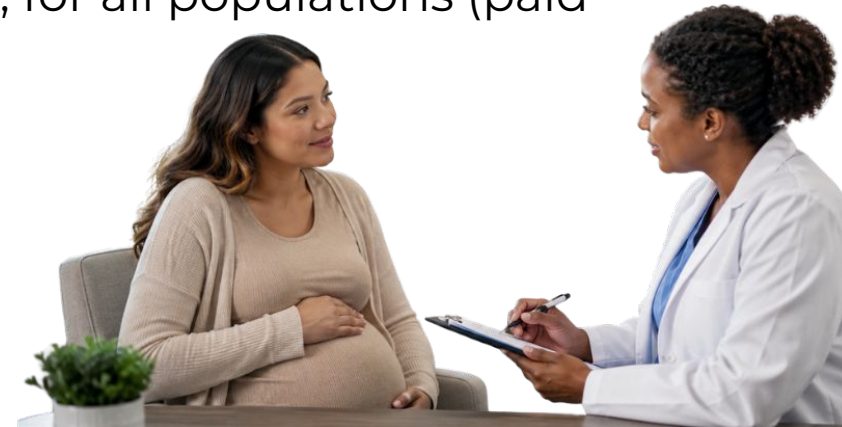
Promoting Behavioral Health Integration in Medical Care

- **Align organizations around a bipartisan vision/need to “carve-in”** behavioral health in medical insurance contracts (“kill the carve out”)
- Align organizations around a bi-partisan vision/need to create a **federal telepsychiatry consultation program for PCPs/OBs** that provides ongoing funding to existing telepsych hubs (currently providing OB or Peds support) and supports dev. and the expansion of new hubs in all states, for all populations (paid for by a tax of commercial insurers).
- Promote our **5 stages of BH integration** (PHQ-4 to CoCM)



The Intersection Maternal Mental Health Integration Behavioral Health Integration in Maternal Health Care

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We are Clinicalizing and Communitizing MMH

Clinicalize

We work to advance the integration of MMH into obstetric care. When obstetric providers screen and treat maternal mental health disorders just as they do other biological disorders, they save lives and combat stigma.

Communitize

We promote community-based solutions including peer support, support groups, and the need for community based MMH nonprofits. These nonprofits provide culturally and linguistically relevant care which can and should be reimbursed by Medicaid and private insurers.

What Makes Us Unique

Of the five other MMH organizations, the Policy Center is most known for understanding the complex health delivery system, including how change can be driven through:

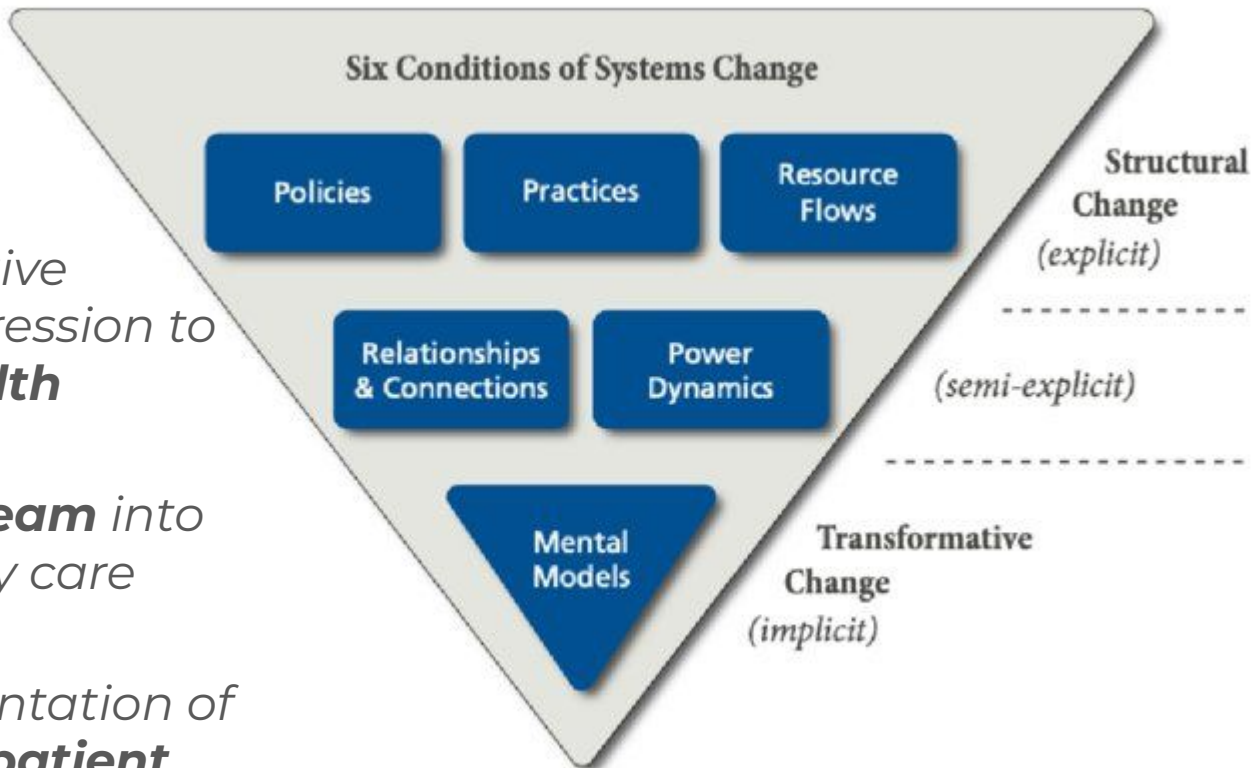
- Integration of mental health care into medical health care (BHI)
- Provider payment & quality monitoring strategy
- Insurance/coverage benefit design
- Provider network adequacy

This understanding has helped the Policy Center lead the way in identifying the most pressing barriers to screening and treatment.

We are systems change facilitators

Examples of our Systems change facilitation

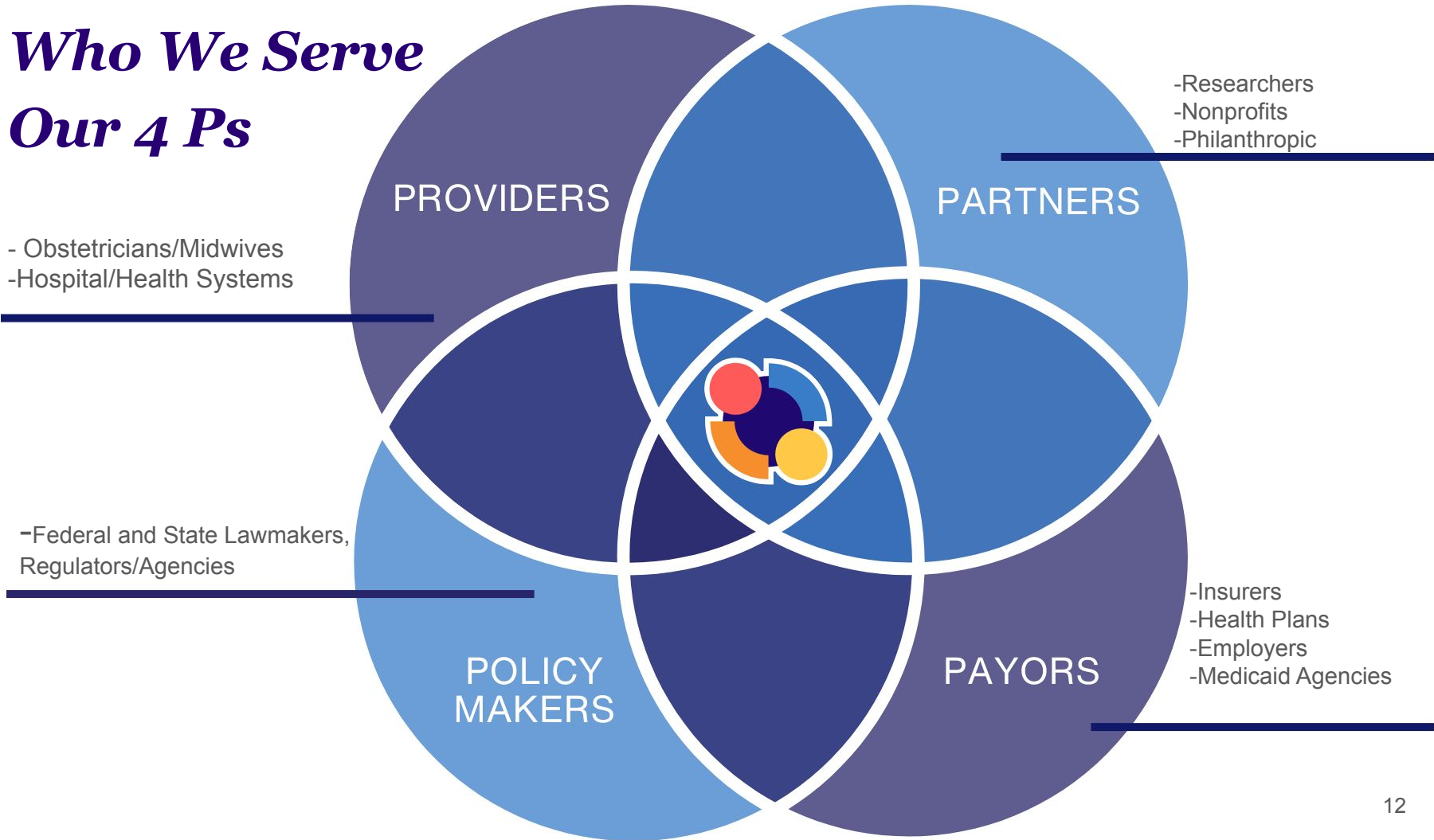
1. Changing the narrative from postpartum depression to **Maternal Mental Health**
2. **Moving MMH upstream** into pregnancy & maternity care
3. Catalyzing implementation of **postpartum care outpatient benefits** - not just coverage



(Kania, Kramer & Senge, 2018)

Who We Serve

Our 4 Ps



Our 3 Aims

Appropriate Screening

Moving upstream - to pregnancy

Moving screening upstream into maternity care starting in pregnancy and through 6-12 months postpartum. Using evidence-based, comprehensive, easy to use and culturally appropriate screening tools and tests.

Insurers have adequate provider networks, pay providers reasonable rates and cover all evidence-based MMH treatments, at an affordable cost to patients, without unreasonable limits and “administrivia”.

Access via Insurance Coverage & Payment

Ample Providers & Programs

Availability of maternity care, MMH professionals, outpatient and inpatient/residential programs.



Appropriate Screening & Diagnosis in OB Care

Goal

Early identification and intervention w/ screening & diagnosis provided in maternity care in pregnancy & through 6-12 months postpartum

Obstetric providers adopt ACOG Clinical Practice Guidelines

Our work

- Advance maternity care reimbursement reform
- Promote mandatory HEDIS screening rate adoption by State Medicaid
- Pilot OB clinic behavioral health integration with community health workers
- Develop and promote a maternal mental health billing guide
- Promote a national OB/PCP telepsychiatry consultation program
- Develop and promote a maternal suicide care pathway
- Address child welfare mandatory reporting concerns related to Plans of Safe Care
- Collaborate with ACOG, Zero Suicide, NCQA, and payers
- Engage CMS and participate in the Medicaid Core Set Workgroup
- Report on Medicaid and private plan HEDIS screening rates
- Develop and promote model legislation on screening and insurer case management



Access to Providers & Treatment

Goal

Access to qualified maternal mental health providers, community and intensive outpatient programs, and evidence-based treatments for all mothers in the U.S

Our work

- **Research and Create County Level Map of Provider Shortage Gaps**
- **In Partnership with PSI Train Providers to become PMH-Certified**
- **Research, Report and Promote Role of State Certified Peer Support Specialists**
- **Facilitate Development of inpatient/outpatient "Level of Care" Guidelines including promotion of Residential Treatment Programs (SUD PPW and MMH)**
- **Researching Coverage Gaps of FDA Approved Treatments**
- **Promoting the Need to Address Obstetric Provider Shortages including Midwifery**
- **Promote Creation of Regional Maternity Care Centers in Labor & Delivery/Obstetric Shortage Areas**
- **Provide Resources to Community Based Orgs (CBOs) interested in billing to become sustainable**



Ample Insurance Coverage

Our work

- Produce billing & coverage tools and resources
- Promote use of certified peers/CHWs in MMH field
- Share patient/providers barriers to care
- Promote Carving in Mental Health Benefits into Medical Contracts
- Catalyze network adequacy monitoring by insurers/plans of PMH-Certified providers
- Promote insurer adoption of the Policy Center's Whole Mom Standards

Goal

- Private Insurers and Medicaid plans meet criteria for OB/MMH
- Best practice benefit coverage
 - Behavioral health integration
 - Provider reimbursement
 - Provider network adequacy
 - Coverage of FDA approved drug/digital therapeutic/devices
 - Inclusion of MMH in high risk care/case management programs
 - Reporting HEDIS MMH screening and follow up measures

Our How

CRITICAL CONTENT & RESEARCH

- Issue Briefs
- Fact Sheets
- Sharing Research & Articles
- Original Research (Report Cards, Embedding CHW Pilot)
- Policy Analysis
- Tracking Legislation

FIELD CATALYST

CONVENINGS & COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

- State Nonprofit Policy Consulting
- State Government Agency Policy Consulting
- Maternal Mental Health FORUM
- Webinars
- Congressional Briefings
- Providing Technical Assistance

Informing the Field

Research, Reports and Policy Analysis

- We release over 40 articles/reports a year: original research, annual report cards, risk/resources report, issue briefs, fact sheets, and opinions/recommendations through partners like the National Gov. Assoc.

FORUM

- Annual event bringing 800+ cross sector change agents each Spring

Congressional Briefings, Webinars & Weekly eNews

- Annual event bringing 800+ cross sector change agents each Spring



Behavioral Health Integration (BHI) in Obstetrics

We are helping to move MMH detection and support upstream starting in pregnancy to prevent preterm birth and negative maternal child health outcomes. We are also facilitating the implementation postpartum care through 12 months.

We will continue to provide tools and technical assistance:

- Screening tools and Sequencing
- Tech-Enabled Solutions
- Obstetric Billing Guidance
- CHW Integration in OB Care (Pilot) Learnings
- Maternity Care Finance Reform Insights

Substance Use Disorder in Obstetrics

Emerging: Substance Use Disorder integration



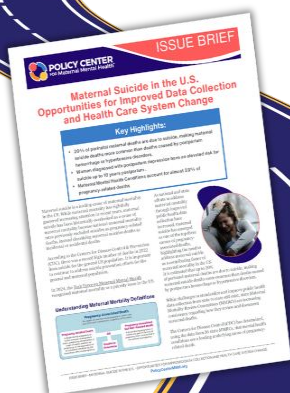
Maternal Suicide Prevention

We [urged the CDC to begin tracking maternal suicide data](#), and now, it's well-recognized that maternal suicide is a leading cause of maternal mortality.

We continue to:

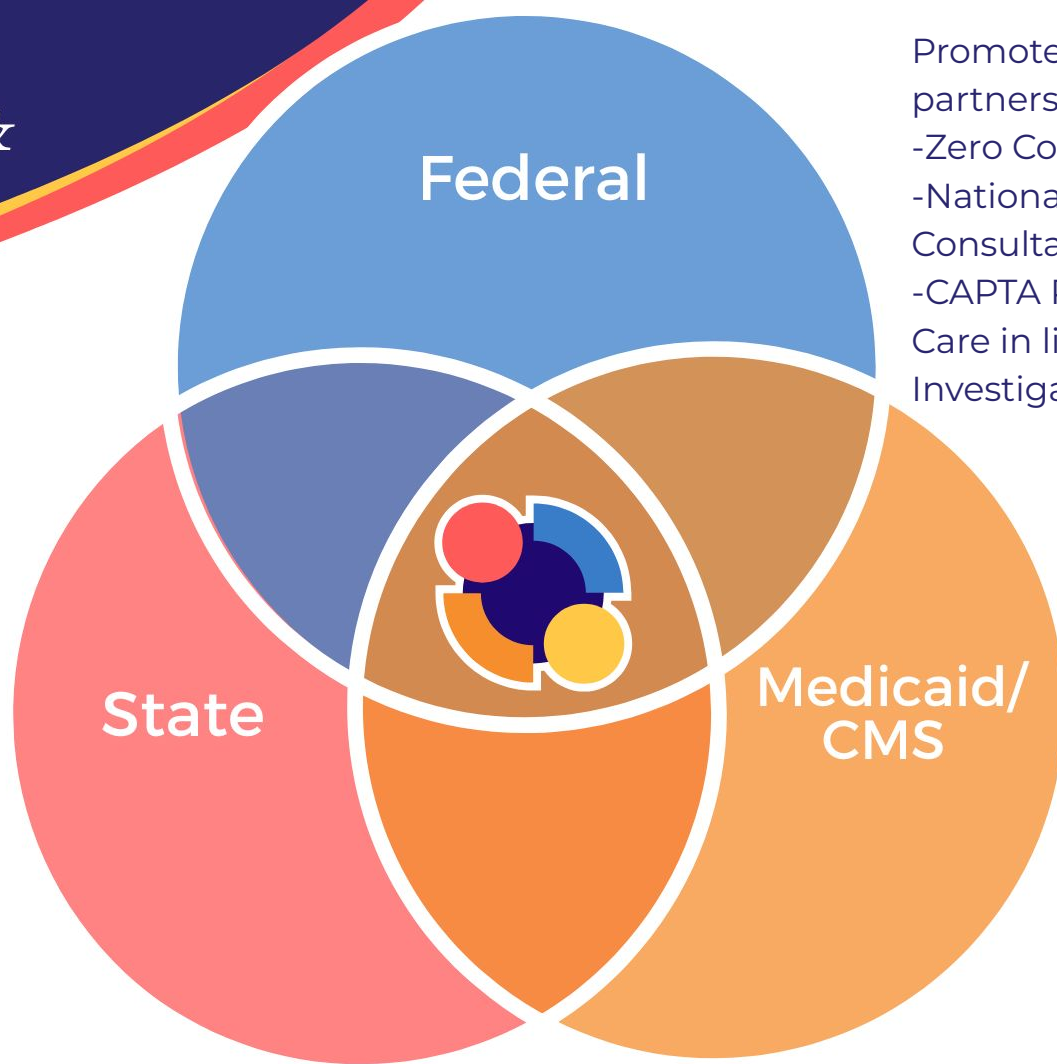
- Release updated data, prevention strategies, and policy recommendations in our [Maternal Suicide Issue Brief](#).
- Advance suicide prevention

In 2025 we developed the [maternal suicide care pathway](#), which we will share with key leaders, researchers and clinicians.



Our Policy Pathways & Priorities

- Model Legislation
- Legislation Tracking
- Legislator TA
- Medicaid Agency TA
- NonProfit Advocacy TA



- Promote to/with non-profit partners & Congress:
- Zero Cost Maternity Care
 - National OB/PCP Telepsych Consultation w/ Regional Hubs
 - CAPTA Reauth Plans of Safe Care in lieu of CPS Investigations

- Postpartum Care Implementation
- Measurement & QI (HEDIS)
- Maternity Care Payment Reform
- Network Adequacy
- Model MCO Contract Language

Training and Technical Assistance to State Perinatal Quality Collaboratives (PQCs) and Medicaid Agencies (SMA)/Offices of Rural Health Transformation (RHT)

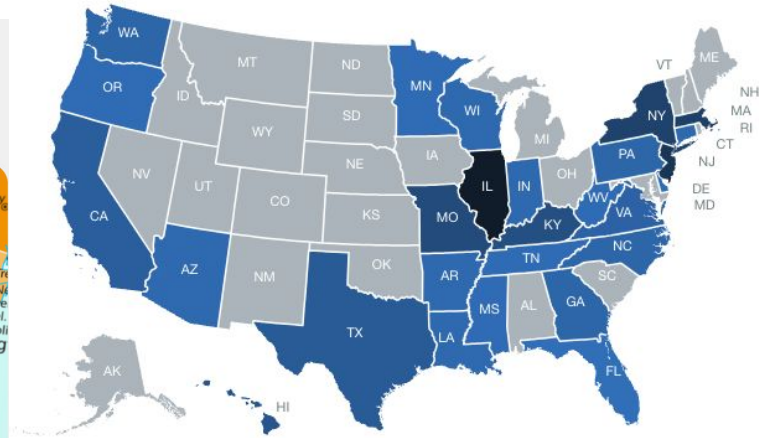
We are converting our state non-profit and government agency fellows learning communities to support state Perinatal Quality Collaboratives (PQC) and State Medicaid Agencies and Rural Health Transformation leaders.



Supporting Evidence Based State Legislation

- Promoting use of the PC's model MMH legislation
- Tracking and analyzing state legislation and providing updates to the field
- Providing feedback/technical assistance to legislative offices in real-time
- Updating our state legislation profiles w/ passed legislation
- Producing the annual MMH state legislative report

2024 State Maternal Mental Health Legislation Report



Informing Congress and Federal Agencies

- Providing technical assistance to Key Congressional Offices and Agencies
- Sharing issue briefs and policy recommendations to support creation of new policy
- Providing analysis of legislation and regulations & their impact on MMH
- Hosting a Annual Congressional Briefing during MMH Awareness Month



Congressional Briefing: **2025 Maternal Mental Health State Report Cards**

Thursday, May 29, 2025

