

The Transforming Maternal Health (TMaH) Model

February 2024

Among wealthy countries, the United States is the most dangerous place to give birth. To change this deplorable reality, childbearing families need to be able to access affordable maternity care that advances equity and supports birthing people to feel listened to, respected, safe, and healthy throughout their pregnancy and postpartum period.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently announced a new initiative, the [Transforming Maternal Health \(TMaH\) Model](#), that marks a significant milestone in addressing our intractable maternal health crisis which disproportionately harms Black and Indigenous birthing people. TMaH is the latest in a [series of actions](#) CMS is pursuing to further advance maternal health equity, quality, and safety.

Background

TMaH will be a decade-long pilot that aims to transform how maternity care is provided, who provides it, and how to pay for care that childbearing families need and want.

Up to 15 states will be given technical assistance and awarded up to \$17 million to develop and implement a whole-person approach to pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care for birthing people with Medicaid and CHIP coverage. Through this model, CMS intends to improve outcomes and experiences for pregnant and postpartum people and their newborns, with a focus on reducing health inequities.

How TMaH Aims to Transform Maternity Care

The National Partnership for Women & Families supports TMaH as an important lever for achieving crucial quality and equity improvements in maternity care.

Participating states will be expected to implement policies that the National Partnership has long championed, such as:

- increasing access to midwives, birth centers, doulas, and perinatal community health workers;
- providing risk assessments, referrals, and follow-ups for perinatal depression, anxiety, substance use disorder, and health-related social needs;
- delivering personalized care that is consistent with individual values, preferences, and needs; and
- investing in data infrastructure to support data collection and sharing to reach health equity goals.

We are very encouraged by this unprecedented opportunity to test, identify, and scale value-based delivery and payment reforms that transform maternity care for birthing people and solve our nation’s deepest health inequities.

What’s next?

CMS is expected to release a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for state Medicaid agencies (SMAs) in Spring 2024. Applications will be due in Summer 2024, and states will be selected by the Fall. Participating states will have a three-year pre-implementation period when they will be expected to work with CMS, legislatures, and others to strengthen perinatal systems, and create partnerships with managed care entities, health systems and hospitals, birth centers, health centers, maternity care providers, birth justice and other advocacy organizations, and community-based organizations.

The National Partnership will continue to assess the model as more information becomes available. Some of the key questions we have are:

- **How will CMS enforce or hold states accountable for partnering with community-based organizations?** For this model to be successful, the design and implementation of each state’s program must be shaped by the priorities and expertise of the people most impacted and the birth justice community.
- **Will states have sufficient resources and adequate infrastructure to report complete and accurate race and ethnicity data, and will they be required to stratify outcomes?** All state Medicaid programs collect self-reported race and ethnicity information as required by CMS, however the completeness and accuracy of these reported data [vary by state](#) due to a myriad of challenges. Without the right data and stratified outcomes, it is impossible to measure inequities and hold providers accountable for achieving results.

- **How will provider payments be structured in each state?** The main system for paying for healthcare in the U.S. (fee-for-service) rewards paying for a lot of expensive care, regardless of whether it is needed or how well it works. This is a major driver of the maternal health crisis. We need a healthcare system that pays for what works and what people need and want—especially in maternity care. States have a critical role to play in shifting payment to better serve birthing families.

Call to Action

As members of Congress, we encourage you to:

- Publicly support this model and share the news with provider organizations and community leaders in your state.
- Call on your state’s Medicaid agency to review the upcoming NOFO and strongly consider applying, then encourage them to partner with birth justice leaders and community-based organizations during the application and pre-implementation periods.
- The state option to extend Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum was made permanent by the bipartisan 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act. If your state is [one of few states left](#) to not extend coverage, urge key policymakers in your state to take up this critical option.
- Share our [recommendations](#) on improving access to midwifery care, community birth settings, doula support, and community-based and -led perinatal health worker groups to CMS and SMAs.

TMaH has the potential to be transformational, but it will require all key stakeholders to get involved – from the design, to implementation, to evaluation. The maternal health crisis demands immediate and comprehensive action now.

More information on TMaH’s care delivery transformations will be shared in a CMS overview webinar scheduled for February 2024. For more detailed information about the model, please visit the CMS [model page](#).

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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