



## Maternal Care

# Improve Maternal Care

2023

### Milestone #1

Continue activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes of insufficient prenatal care.

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*This milestone seeks to enhance birth outcomes among Louisiana Medicaid Members by continuing activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes of insufficient prenatal care. This report offers a summary and support for the activities carried out by Network Providers in 2023. The report illustrates how this milestone extends earlier accomplishments, promotes continued improvement, and ensures sustained progress toward realizing the goals of the Maternal Care Project.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Louisiana Department of Health (“LDH”), as part of its contracts with each Louisiana managed care organization, authorizes additional payments to any Medicaid managed care organizations that implement an LDH initiative to improve maternal care (the “Maternal Care Project”).

The Louisiana Medicaid managed care organizations that chose to work with LDH in the Maternal Care Project incentive arrangement hired an extensive network of physicians, mid-level providers, clinics, and hospitals that is capable of reaching Healthy Louisiana enrollees across the State (“ACO”) to assist the Medicaid managed care organizations related to their participation in the Maternal Care Project (the Medicaid managed care organizations and ACO are collectively referred to as the “MCO”). As part of the Maternal Care Project, the MCO must continue activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care. This goal has been accomplished through the implementation and continuation and expansion of activities at the facilities of hospitals participating in the ACO (“Network Providers”).

The following report summarizes the MCO’s efforts to continue activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care. The MCO and Network Providers remain dedicated to sustaining these valuable activities purposefully designed to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, gaps in care for the benefit of all Healthy Louisiana enrollees (“Members”), fostering healthier pregnancies and improving maternal care outcomes.

## **II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Maternal Care Project has proven successful since its inception during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. During the initial year, the MCO studied the current state of maternal care gaps in Louisiana and reported on treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care.<sup>1</sup> The MCO also sought to explore ways to reduce these gaps by identifying ideas to improve prenatal healthcare services.<sup>2</sup> In 2021, the MCO asked Network Providers to choose one of five activities, based on their unique community needs and the treatment gaps for the Members they serve. Every participating Network Provider selected and implemented an activity in 2021 and the MCO submitted support for those activities that detailed how activities were designed and implemented.<sup>3</sup>

In 2022, Network Providers either continued and expanded their activities from 2021 or selected a new activity to implement.<sup>4</sup> As the Maternal Care Project continues in its fourth year, Network Providers are again either continuing and expanding their 2022 activities or implementing new activities that better fit the needs of their specific Member populations. This report details the 2023 efforts of Network Providers.

### **III. CONTINUATION OF ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO ADDRESS TREATMENT GAPS AND ROOT CAUSES OF INSUFFICIENT PRENATAL CARE**

2023 is the third consecutive year of Network Providers carrying out activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care. The continuity of these efforts ensures that Network Providers sustain progress made in improving maternal care, build on prior successes, and continuously refine strategies based on accumulated experience. This promotes more comprehensive and effective solutions to challenges encountered and ultimately leads to better health outcomes for maternal Members.

Providing hospitals with the option to expand their prior activities or choose new ones adds a layer of adaptability, allowing Network Providers to tailor their initiatives to the evolving needs of the maternal Members at their facilities. Network Providers can address gaps in care and root causes more precisely with customized approaches that may change over time, maximizing the impact of their efforts. Ultimately, Members benefit by receiving care that remains current and highly relevant to their unique needs.

#### **A. PROVIDER ACTIVITY CHOICES**

In 2023, Network Providers either continued and expanded their 2022 activity or implemented a new activity from among five MCO-identified activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care. The activity choices were:

- Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation;
- Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits;
- Implement broader telemedicine programs;
- Educate patients on pregnancy using the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' patient pamphlets (or similar educational materials); and
- Utilize FQHCs or other clinics in underserved areas.

The table below summarizes which activities the Network Providers chose for 2023 and an overview of the activities selected by each Network Provider is included as Appendix A.

Activity Designed to Address Treatment Gaps and Root Causes of Insufficient Prenatal Care	Number of Network Providers Implementing
Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.	15
Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.	14
Implement broader telemedicine programs.	8
Educate patients on pregnancy using the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' patient pamphlets (or similar educational materials).	2
Utilize FQHCs or other clinics in underserved areas.	2

Six of the thirty-five participating Network Providers went above and beyond the requirements and conducted two activities in 2023. Additionally, 80% of the Network (twenty-eight Network Providers) chose to continue and expand the activities they implemented in 2022. Only seven of the thirty-five participating Network Providers chose to implement a new activity in 2023, indicating that Network Providers largely found activities that work for their specific populations and achieved meaningful progress on maternal Member health.

## **B. SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES**

To demonstrate achievement of this milestone and successful implementation of their activities, Network Providers submitted detailed support for each activity they either continued and expanded or newly implemented in 2023. Support submitted by the Network Providers is included as Appendix B.

## **IV. EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF PLAN AND METHODOLOGY**

Evaluating the effectiveness of the plan and methodology to continue performing activities designed to address treatment gap and root causes for insufficient prenatal care is critical to ensuring the activities deliver their intended impact. As the MCO continues to assess the success of the plan and methodology, the insights and lessons highlighted by this evaluation will help refine strategies and ultimately positively impact the health of pregnant Members. The MCO approached this evaluation with a comprehensive view to uncover patterns, successes, and areas that require further attention.

In this evaluation of effectiveness, the MCO recognizes not only the immediate outcomes but also the long-term implications, understanding that sustained improvements in maternal care require a keen understanding of what works and why so that Network Providers can make informed decisions and adjustments.

## A. QUANTITATIVE EVALUATION

Implementing activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care helps the Network Providers realize the overarching goals of the Maternal Care Project. By actively addressing these critical issues, the MCO continues to make significant strides toward achieving improved maternal care outcomes and promoting healthier pregnancies for Members. Notably, the Network was able to partially meet all 2022 goals.

At the end of 2022, the MCO calculated the performance for the following outcome milestones:

- Decrease the percentage of nulliparous enrollees with a term, singleton baby in a vertex position delivered by cesarean birth (C-section).
  - 2022 Performance: 24.59%
  - Baseline: 25.87%
  - Goal Achievement: Partial, 98.80%
  
- Decreased percentage of enrollees with elective vaginal deliveries or elective cesarean sections at  $\geq 37$  and  $< 39$  weeks of gestation completed.
  - 2022 Performance: 2.21%
  - Baseline: 2.98%
  - Goal Achievement: Partial, 71.82%
  
- Decrease the percentage of enrollees with live births that weighed less than 2,500 grams.
  - 2022 Performance: 9.66%
  - Baseline: 9.95%
  - Goal Achievement: Partial, 57.96%

While the MCO celebrates the substantial progress made in partially achieving 2022 goals, it also recognizes that partial accomplishment signals room for further improvement. Partial achievement also underscores the importance of Network Providers continuing activities designed to address these outcomes. The MCO is confident that the 2023 activities implemented and continued by Network Providers will continue to drive better performance.

## B. QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

### 1. Member Feedback

In addition to the quantitative evaluation, the MCO worked with Network Providers to evaluate Member feedback regarding the effectiveness of the activities. This comprehensive approach helped the MCO determine which activities are improving outcomes and which require modification or supplementation.

## 2. Network Provider Feedback

The MCO solicited Network Provider feedback throughout the year regarding the effectiveness of activities, impact on Members, and advice on how to improve the activities going forward. In particular, the MCO conducted a Maternal Care continuous quality improvement (“CQI”) workshop during which the Network Providers presented on the effectiveness of activities, barriers to their implementation, and ways to improve.<sup>5</sup> The MCO also conducts monthly group discussions to get more granular feedback on any issues arising during activities’ implementations. These calls provide a regular opportunity to address Network Provider questions and concerns regarding activity continuation, expansion, and implementation as they arise.

## V. CONCLUSION

In 2023, the MCO continued activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care. Now in the third year of activity implementation and continuation, Network Providers built on the lessons learned in previous years. All participating Network Providers continued or implemented at least one activity in 2023 and submitted support demonstrating that these activities were carried out at their facilities. The MCO evaluated the effectiveness of the plan and methodology to continue performing activities designed to address treatment gaps and root causes for insufficient prenatal care through both quantitative and qualitative means. These efforts resulted in remarkable progress and measurable advancements in the quality of care provided to maternal Members across Louisiana.

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<sup>1</sup> See Maternal Care Milestone 1.1 and 1.4 reports.

<sup>2</sup> See Maternal Care Milestone 1.3 report.

<sup>3</sup> See Maternal Care Milestone 2.2 report.

<sup>4</sup> See Maternal Care Milestone 3.1 report.

<sup>5</sup> See Maternal Care Milestone 4.6 report.



***APPENDIX A: Overview of Network Provider Activities***

<b>Network Provider Name</b>	<b>2023 Network Provider Activities Designed to Address Treatment Gaps &amp; Root Causes of Insufficient Prenatal Care</b>
Abbeville General Hospital	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Allen Parish Community Healthcare	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Baton Rouge General Medical Center	Educate patients on pregnancy planning using American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' patient pamphlets (or similar educational materials).
CHRISTUS Coushatta Health Care Center	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits. Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
CHRISTUS Health Shreveport-Bossier	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits. Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
CHRISTUS Ochsner Lake Area Hospital	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits. Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
CHRISTUS Ochsner St. Patrick Hospital	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits. Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits. Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Iberia Medical Center	Utilize FQHCs or other clinics in underserved areas.
North Caddo Medical Center	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Ochsner Abrom Kaplan Memorial Hospital	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
Ochsner Acadia General Hospital	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
Ochsner Lafayette General	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
Ochsner LSU Health Monroe	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Ochsner LSU Health Shreveport	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Ochsner Medical Center	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
Ochsner Medical Center - Baton Rouge	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
Ochsner Medical Center - Kenner	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
Ochsner Medical Center - North Shore	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
Ochsner St. Anne General Hospital	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
Ochsner St. Martin Hospital	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
Ochsner St. Mary	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
Ochsner University Hospital and Clinics	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
Opelousas General	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Pointe Coupee General Hospital	Utilize FQHCs or other clinics in underserved areas.
Rapides Regional Medical Center	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
Savoy Medical Center	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits. Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Slidell Memorial Hospital	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Southern Regional Medical Corporation	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
St. Bernard Parish Hospital	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
St. Charles Parish Hospital	Implement broader telemedicine programs.
St. Tammany Parish Hospital	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.
Terrebonne General Medical Center	Utilize Emergency Department navigators to connect expecting mothers with primary care providers for prenatal visits.
The General Hospital	Educate patients on pregnancy planning using American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' patient pamphlets (or similar educational materials).
Tulane University Hospital and Clinic	Increase awareness of Medicaid transportation.

**APPENDIX B: Detailed Support for Activities**

See additional documentation submitted herewith.