

Healthy Moms, Vibrant Futures: Delivering Pennsylvania's Maternal Health Strategic Action Plan June 2025



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services



Pennsylvania
Department of Health



Pennsylvania
Department of Drug and
Alcohol Programs



Pennsylvania
Insurance Department

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is taking action against the state's high maternal mortality rate through the development of a statewide Maternal Health Strategic Action Plan.

In partnership with Governor Shapiro's office, the health agencies, along with additional state agencies with an interest in helping to advance the plan, worked collaboratively to develop this first-ever statewide action plan.

A Pennsylvania where every pregnant and birthing individual has easy access to high-quality perinatal, birth and postpartum care that is person-centered, comprehensive, equitable, and affordable and that results in healthy outcomes and the potential for long-term good health and wellbeing.

Collaboration



The health agencies considered information and priorities of the following groups and organizations in establishing plan goals:

- Pennsylvania Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC)
- Philadelphia MMRC
- The Black Maternal Health and Women's Health caucuses
- PA PQC (Perinatal Quality Collaborative)
- Jewish Healthcare Foundation Collaborative
- HAP (Health Association of PA)
- Maternal Health Blueprint (Federal)
- National Governor's Association
- PA Maternal Health Collaborative



1. Increase Access to High-Quality Care
2. Support Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorder Needs
3. Improve Rural Health and Maternity Care Deserts
4. Address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)
5. Expand and Diversify the Maternal Health Workforce

Goals Defined by Action Plan Priorities



Action!	How we define these priorities as goals: With the overarching goal of Year One action!
Increase Access to High-Quality Care	Improve perinatal health outcomes by supporting access to and utilization of high-quality perinatal care.
Support BH and SUD Needs	Improve detection of behavioral health risks during pregnancy and postpartum and improve referrals and uptake of treatment and supports.
Improve rural health and maternity care deserts	Strengthen maternity care resources in rural communities and maternity deserts.
Address SDOH	Increase awareness of and utilization of supports that address health-related social needs.
Expand and diversify the maternal health workforce	Diversify the Workforce to Build Improved Trust and Better Connections Between Patients & Providers

Strategic Action Plan Overview

The Project Team reviewed data, conducted research, and sought collaborative involvement from people with lived experience from all regions of the state, and from stakeholders, providers, and community-based organizations.

This research helped to form the plan's situational analysis and set goals.

The Project Team is working in tandem to tout current initiatives as they further refine and begin to implement the Maternal Health Strategic Action Plan for Pennsylvania.

SME Convening



One of the strategies in developing our plan involved talking with subject matter experts in each of the four health agencies to learn more about their work to support maternal health.

We held a convening in August 2024 that also included the departments of Conversation and Natural Resources, Labor & Industry, the Governor's commissions, and representatives of the Diversifying Doulas Initiative.



Research: Listening Sessions



Listening Sessions – We hosted 15 listening sessions to date. These will continue throughout – and as part of – implementation.

North 10 Philadelphia (September 2024)
Title V Providers convening (October 2024)
East Stroudsburg University (October 2024)
Healthy Start Pittsburgh (October 2024)
Mercy Center for Women Erie (October 2024)
St. Luke's Allentown (November 2024)
Lincoln University (November 2024)
Scranton Primary FQHC (November 2024)
TriCounty Community Action (December 2024)
Disability Community (virtual, December 2024)
PCADV virtual (2 sessions, virtual, December 2024)
Governor's Commission for LGBTQ Affairs (virtual, January 2025)
Chester County Dept of Drug and Alcohol Services (January 2025)



Listening Session Key Takeaways



Health-Related Social Needs

Challenges with transportation, child care, and housing are barriers to care and good health through pregnancy and postpartum. This was especially true of participants who had experienced intimate partner violence in their relationship.

Transportation challenges were particularly pervasive regardless of geography and provider availability.

Building Better Connections Between Patients and Providers

Concerns with treatment by providers during pregnancy: not listened to, not heard, validated, believed, and addressed. Distrust because of past treatment, experiences with discrimination or racism, and fear based on treatment of others they know. This was expressed most frequently by people with physical or intellectual disabilities and the LGBTQ+ community.

Listening Session Key Takeaways



Improving Education for Women and Birthing People

Better Education = Improved Patient Experience + Self-Advocacy

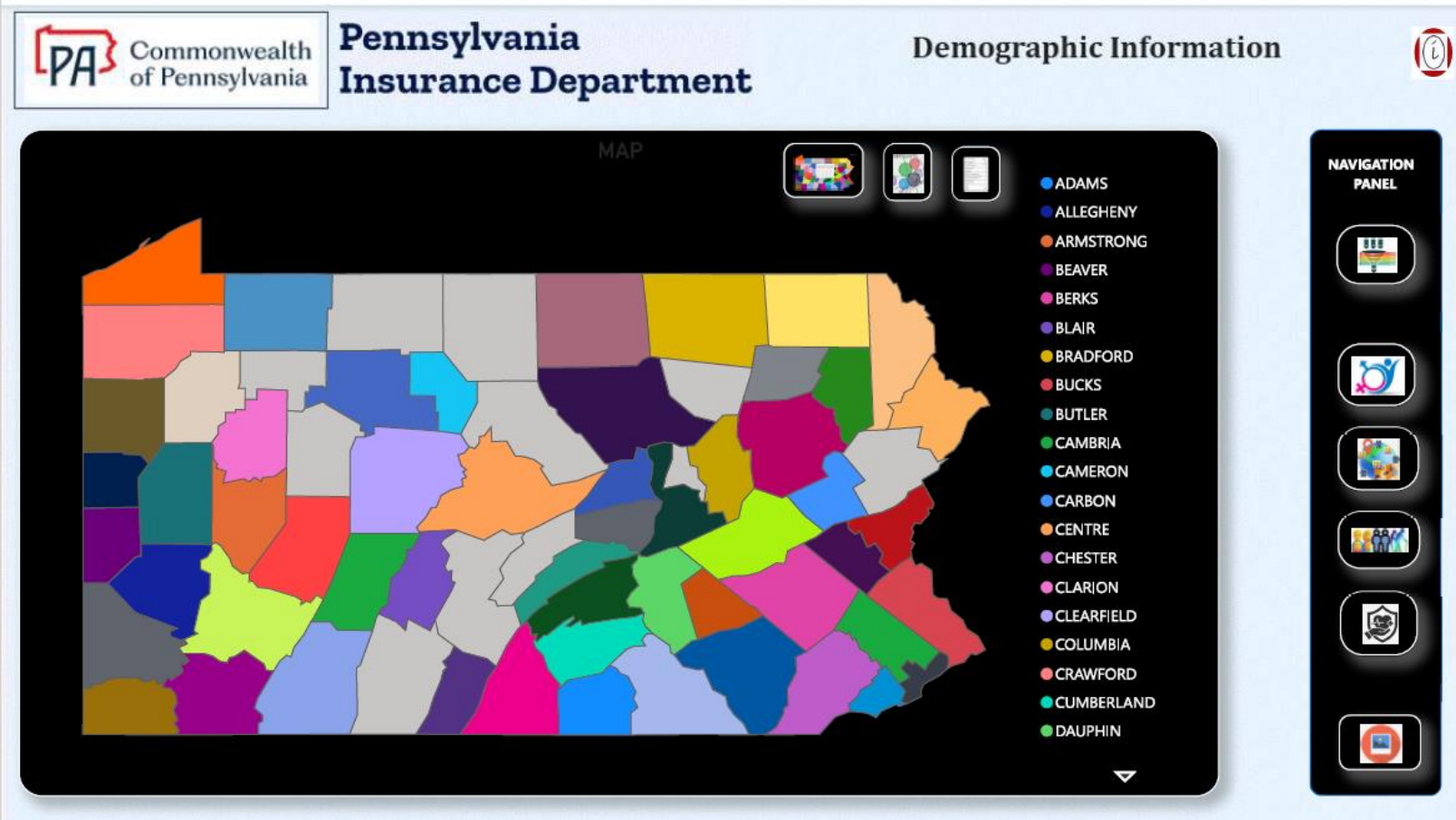
Focused Education = Knowing what questions to ask = Self-Advocacy + Confidence in decisions

Increased Education = Healthier Women and birthing people with better outcomes

Provider Accessibility

Lack of providers in rural communities.

Research: Survey



Key findings based on responses from people currently or recent pregnant (182 unique respondents):

Behavioral Health (BH)

For people currently or recently pregnant:

- 16% (29/182 respondents) delayed getting MH/SUD care .
- For people currently or recently pregnant who delayed getting MH/SUD care (29 unique respondents):
 - 97% (28/29) of respondents delayed counseling/therapy for MH/SUD care. Out of the types of care delayed, counseling/therapy was the most frequently delayed care type.
 - 81% (21/26 respondents) said they would not have delayed care if they did not have to wait a long time for services.

Next steps: Perinatal Action Collaborative



Implementation will be a primary focus of Pennsylvania's new maternal health task force, the Perinatal Action Collaborative (PAC). The PAC's members include stakeholders, providers, community-based organizations, and people with lived experience and is tasked with helping to prioritize recommendations and mobilize action to implement strategies that will improve the health of women and pregnant and postpartum individuals in the Commonwealth.

PAC members will focus on the five plan priority areas, review and make any revisions to Year One recommendations while considering Years Two through Five goals and recommendations.

Next steps: Perinatal Action Collaborative



The PAC's work will include determining work plans to act on each recommendation, including necessary partners to engage as part of the work. Priority teams are charged with ensuring each strategy and its implementation is specific, actionable, measurable, scalable, adaptable, and expandable.

Teams are meeting this summer with the goal of completing Year One recommendations by the end of August.

Implementation teams will be available on the Healthy Moms, Vibrant Futures website. Progress from Year One will be reported on in the Healthy Moms, Vibrant Futures Year Two Update.

How you can help!



Instagram at pahumanservices



Facebook at Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Thank you!

Sara Goulet
sgoulet@pa.gov