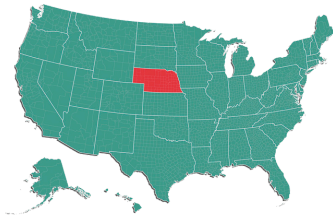


RESPECTFUL CARE INITIATIVE



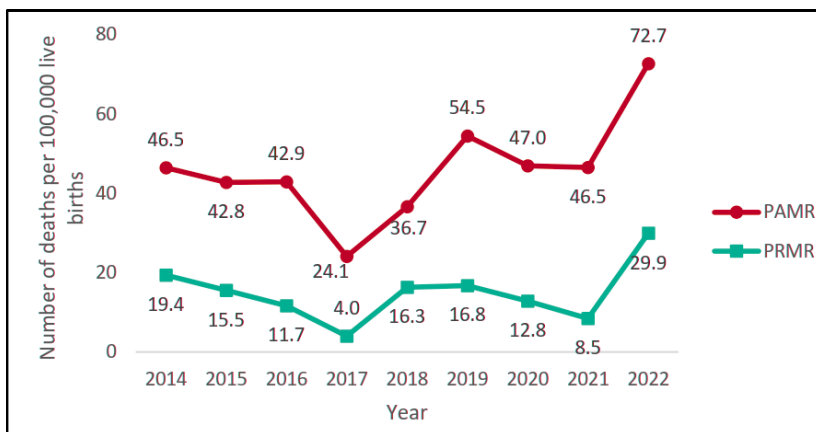
Respectful Care is a foundational initiative that lays the groundwork for all statewide quality improvement initiatives to prioritize just, dignified, and patient-centered care for all Nebraska perinatal and newborn patients and their families.

The Problem in Nebraska



Nebraska, like the nation, has been experiencing a maternal health crisis. The Nebraska pregnancy-associated mortality rate rose significantly in 2022. Racial and geographic disparities persist: non-Hispanic Black and Native American mothers continue to experience a disproportionate burden of both morbidity and mortality. Rural hospital closures and limited behavioral health resources worsen outcomes, particularly for women affected by mental health, substance use, and chronic conditions. Finally, disrespectful care contributes to poor health outcomes and experiences for childbearing women and their newborns.^{1,2}

Figure 1. Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Ratio (N=101) and Pregnancy-Related Mortality Ratio (n=33), Nebraska 2014–2022.¹



Source: State Maternal Death Review Team Annual Report, 2024

WHO IS MOST IMPACTED BY MATERNAL MORBIDITY IN NEBRASKA?

Across all regions of the state, maternal morbidity most affects mothers who²:



Are over age 35



Use Medicaid for healthcare coverage



Have an annual median income below \$31,009



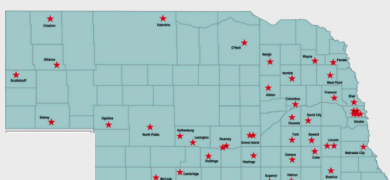
Identify as non-Hispanic Black



ALARMINGLY, OVER 80% OF THESE DEATHS WERE DEEMED PREVENTABLE.

NEBRASKA'S MATERNITY CARE DESERTS ARE GROWING

Nebraska is one of the states with the highest percentage of maternity care deserts; 51.3% of Nebraska counties lack adequate access to obstetric services³. Since 2017, 10 birthing facilities have stopped providing maternity care, including 9 Critical Access Hospitals and one freestanding Birth Center. These closures disproportionately affect rural families who have to travel long distances for care, increasing the risk of poor maternal and infant outcomes.²



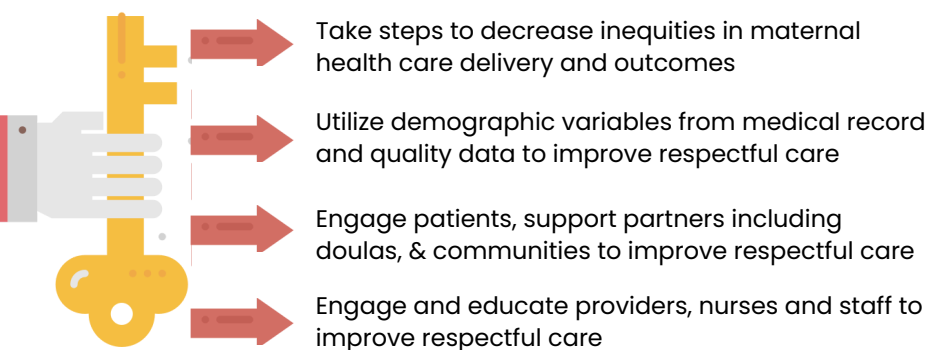
RESPECTFUL CARE IMPROVES HEALTH OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES FOR WOMEN

To improve the quality of maternity care, healthcare systems can support care that is respectful and considers the patient's values, needs, and desires (patient-centered care) equally for all mothers. Maternity care providers can ensure patients are engaged in their health care and feel heard and respected.⁴

Respectful Maternity Care:

- maintains dignity, privacy, autonomy and confidentiality
- ensures freedom from harm and mistreatment
- allows for shared decision-making and continuous support during labor and childbirth
- upholds provider accountability and provision for informed consent

KEY DRIVERS TO PROMOTE RESPECTFUL CARE



RESPECTFUL CARE KEY STRATEGIES

- 1 Establish doula-friendly practices, including integration of doulas into the care team and implementation of a doula policy (developed in partnership with doulas)
- 2 Review maternal health quality data stratified by race, ethnicity, language, urban/rural residence and Medicaid status to identify disparities and address opportunities for improvement
- 3 Take steps to engage patients and/or community members to provide input on quality improvement efforts
- 4 Implement a strategy for sharing expected respectful care practices during delivery admission; and survey patients before discharge on their care experience (using the PREM tool) to provide feedback
- 5 Standardize system to provide patient education prior to discharge on postpartum safety including urgent maternal warning signs and tools to improve communication with providers
- 6 Implement education for providers and staff on the importance of listening to patients, providing respectful care and addressing implicit bias and provide opportunities for discussion and feedback

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Visit [NPQIC.org](https://npqic.org) to learn more about the collaborative and identify opportunities to get involved.

References:

1. Maternal Death Review Team Annual Report, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (December 2024). [https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Maternal-Mortality-Review-Committee-\(MMRC\).aspx](https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Maternal-Mortality-Review-Committee-(MMRC).aspx).
2. 2024 NPQIC Summit Executive Summary. (December 2024). https://npqic.org/file_download/inline/d9078801-4ce9-42f3-a840-84140182036a.
3. March of Dimes. Nowhere to go: Maternity Care Deserts Across the US. (2024). https://www.marchofdimes.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/2024_MoD_MCD_Report.pdf
4. Respectful Maternity Care Framework and Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline. (March 2022). [https://www.jogann.org/article/S0884-2175\(22\)00001-6/abstract](https://www.jogann.org/article/S0884-2175(22)00001-6/abstract)



THE NEBRASKA PERINATAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

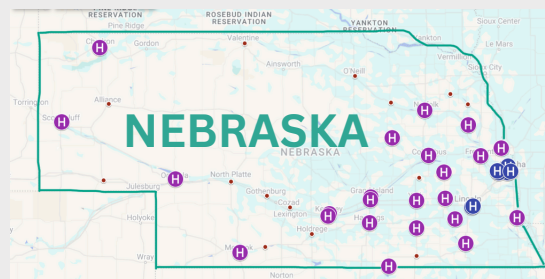
MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

- 2021: NPQIC began conceptualizing the Respectful Care Initiative. Community partners, clinical leaders, and patient voices provided crucial input for key strategies and resource development.
- 2023: The initiative was implemented in 8 birthing facilities in Douglas and Lancaster Counties (Wave 1).
- 2024: The initiative was expanded statewide (Wave 2). Currently 30 of Nebraska's 44 birthing hospitals are participating.
- 2025: NPQIC established a group of patients and community members with lived experience that further informs the Respectful Care Initiative.

INITIATIVE AIM

By December 2025, more than 75% of NE birthing hospitals will be participating in the Respectful Care Initiative, and more than 75% of participating hospitals will have all 6 key strategies in place to promote respectful, dignified, and safe patient-centered care for all maternal patients.

Figure 2. Current participating hospitals in the Respectful Care Initiative across Nebraska. (Wave 1: Dark blue, Wave 2: Purple)



The initiative has the support of the Maternal Health Innovation Taskforce, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Maternal and Infant Health Program, and the Nebraska Maternal Mortality Review Committee (MMRC).

NPQIC is a statewide network of perinatal clinicians, nurses, hospitals, patients, community stakeholders, public health leaders, and policymakers that aims to improve outcomes for mothers and babies across Nebraska.

This initiative is funded by a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.