

DATE: April 7, 2020

RE: Auxiliary Maternity Units to address surge capacity and safety in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Systems can address surge capacity and improve safety by diverting low-risk, pregnant patients to temporary auxiliary maternity units. Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, the US faced unprecedented disparities, morbidity and mortality, and a crisis within the maternal/child health system. Hospitals are now reconfiguring labor units to become ICUs. There is an increased need for physicians to focus on high-risk COVID (+) patients. Labor and delivery units are becoming short-staffed due to COVID-19 exposure and illness. Acute need for personnel has led to recruiting recently retired and non-specialty medical staff to help.

Based on research and programs already tested by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Health Resources and Services Administration, such as Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns, we know that we can provide high-quality care for pregnant women and their infants using skilled providers in a collaborative team model of care. Publications from peer reviewed journals, professional organizations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reiterate the point that high-quality options for care delivery exist.

A proven model conceived by the American Association of Birth Centers can be adapted and implemented quickly. Ideally, the care model requires availability of Rapid Point of Care Testing and PPE. Planning should not be delayed. All payer types should reimburse this model.

Recommendations:

1. Create Auxiliary Maternity Units to expand capacity, reduce potential exposure and limit depletion of necessary critical care resources.
2. Expand the capacity of existing freestanding birth centers for low-risk women.
3. Expand utilization of licensed and/or certified midwives to practice to the full extent of their certification in all states and all facilities.
4. Integrate doulas and other community-based perinatal health workers to provide education and support during pregnancy, labor, delivery, and the postpartum periods.
5. Implement a community-based postpartum and newborn management plan that provides early discharge with safe follow-up care.

Healthy pregnant women and babies are being affected by exposure to COVID-19 and the consequences of hospital surge capacity. Implementing recommendations to create Auxiliary Maternity Units will provide for the health, safety, and personalized experience of families and address unprecedented daily challenges of overburdened hospitals. A team of experts is ready to advise in facility design, minimum standards, and implementation steps for all communities.

For more information and [Guidelines for Auxiliary Maternity Units](#) contact:

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National Supporting Organizations

Ariadne Labs
Ancient Song Doula Services
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Centering Healthcare Institute
DONA International
Every Mother Counts
Foundation for the Advancement of Midwifery
ImprovingBirth
Jewish Healthcare Foundation
Lamaze International
March for Moms
Mom Congress
National Association of Certified Professional Midwives
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Doula Network
Newborn Foundation
Our Bodies Ourselves
Pacific Business Group on Health
Women's Health Activist Movement Global

Other Supporting Organizations

Advanced Ob-Gyn	Canyon Medical Center
Ancient Paths Midwifery	Casa Natal Birth Center
Art of Nursing Care Inc. Art of Birthing	Charleston Birth Place
AZ ACNM Affiliate	Corvallis Birth & Women's Health Center
Babies in Bloom Birth Center	Dar a Luz Birth & Health Center
Babymoon Inn	Del Mar Birth Center
Beach Cities Midwifery & WHC	Flagstaff Birth and Women's Center
Beginnings Birth Center	Full Moon Family Wellness & Birth Center
Belly 2 Birth Doula Services	Graceful Beginnings Midwifery
Belly Centered	Gracefull Birthing Center
Best Start Birth Center	Healing Passages Birth & Wellness Center
Better Beginnings	Hygge Birth and Baby
Birth Care & Family Health Services	ISM
BirthCare & Women's Health, Ltd	Juneau Family Birth Center
Birth Center of Baton Rouge	Love Child
Birth Roots Inc.	Maternity Options of Miami, LLC
Blossom Birth Center	Mariposa Birth and Wellness
Breath of Life Women's Health & Birth Center	Midtown Nurse Midwives
Brooklyn Birthing Center	Minnesota Birth Center
Canyon Midwifery LLC	New Life Midwifery Inc

Newborn Foundation
Nightingale Birth Center
Pacifica Family Maternity Center
Premier Birth Center
Redding Midwifery Group
San Francisco Birth Center
Santa Lucia Birth Center
SCV Birth Center
South Coast Midwifery
The Birth Center of Bloomington-Normal
The Birth Center of Boulder
The Birth Center, A Nursing Corporation
The Birth House
The Midwife Center for Birth and Women's Health
Tree of Life Birth and Gynecology
Tree of Life Healthy Birthing & Parenting
Tucson Doulas
Uptown Village Cooperative
Ventura Birth Center
Vitality Generation & Midwifery LLC / My Family Birth Center
Willow Midwife Center for Birth and Wellness AZ
WNC Birth Center
WomenCare, Inc. DBA FamilyCare Health Centers
Premier Birth Center

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