Attention all Delivering Providers:

We are pleased to announce that <Inset hospital/institute name here> will be participating in the Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative (IPLQC) “Increasing Postpartum Access to Care” (IPAC) Initiative. Given rising maternal morbidity and mortality rates nationally, and in Illinois, and with a large proportion of these events occurring in the postpartum period there is renewed interest in improving how we care for postpartum women during this critical time period. The IPAC initiative supports birthing hospitals to implement standards of practice for postpartum care by offering and scheduling universal early postpartum visits for a maternal health safety check (within 2 weeks postpartum) to improve maternal health outcomes.

Why schedule all women for an early postpartum visit within 2 weeks?

- ACOG (Committee Opinion #736) recommends postpartum care include an additional early visit before the traditional six weeks. ILPQC recommends this visit be scheduled within two weeks to improve our opportunity to better manage early postpartum complications such as elevated blood pressure, wound complications, infection, breastfeeding or mental health concerns. It is easier to schedule this visit prior to hospital discharge and patients are more likely to attend when they have a visit already scheduled to return within two weeks for an early maternal health safety check.

- The obstetric provider and outpatient care team should facilitate all patients returning for a maternal health safety check within two weeks of delivery. The early postpartum visit / maternal health safety check should include: blood pressure check, wound or perineum check, mood check / depression screening, any postpartum bleeding concerns, discussion of infant feeding and supports needed, check in on any medical complications such as diabetes or hypertension and any needed follow up plans or linkage to specialty care, review of any social supports or community resources needed (ie WIC, home visiting programs, lactation support groups), discussion of benefits of pregnancy spacing with review of options for family planning and encourage inter-pregnancy intervals of ≥18 months.

- The Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report (IDPH, 2018) recommends early postpartum visits be scheduled prior to hospital discharge.

What do I need to know?

- ILPQC has developed guidance to facilitate billing and reimbursement for an early postpartum visit within two weeks of delivery for all postpartum patients in addition to the traditional six-week postpartum visit.

- Please refer to the attached materials for: IPAC Fact Sheet, information regarding the process for documentation and billing for IPAC in your office and where to find resources such as OB Providers Early Postpartum Checklist, and patient handouts.

Partnership

We know that we cannot achieve lasting results without your active partnership. We will be collecting data as a part of this statewide initiative. We will track progress to increase the percentage of women with documentation of counseling and scheduling of an early postpartum visit prior to discharge and track the percentage of women receiving education prior to discharge on the benefits of early postpartum visit / maternal health safety check, maternal early warning signs and when to call and recommendations for pregnancy spacing.

By working together, we can improve maternal and newborn outcomes by improving access to postpartum care. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact a member of our IPAC team.

All the best,

Include Nurse Champion, Physician Champion, list members of the QI team