

Improving Maternal and Child Health in Connecticut



Maternal and Child National Health Crisis

Each year in the United States, more than 50,000 birthing people experience life threatening complications, the highest rate among developed countries.

Birthing people of color and infants have disproportionately worse outcomes compared to white birthing people and infants.

Connecticut's Starting Point in Maternal Health

Among HUSKY Health members, rates of Adverse Maternal Outcomes, Overall C-section, and NICU utilization have been on the rise since 2017.

- **Black and Hispanic birthing people have disproportionately higher rates of adverse maternal outcomes**, like hemorrhages or preeclampsia, as compared to birthing people of other races and ethnic groups
- In 2020, **Connecticut's overall c-section rate (34.1%) was the highest in New England** and 8th highest in the United States.
- **Black birthing people experience higher rates of C-sections**, including low-risk C-sections, compared to birthing people of other races and ethnic groups
- **NICU utilization is the highest among Black infants**, with 2022 rate projections predicting that the rate of Black infants will be 20% higher than the overall rate for HUSKY Health infants.

Medicaid Maternity Bundled Payment Program

The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), which covers over 40% of births in the state, is designing a Medicaid Maternity Bundled Payment program with the goal of launching in 2023.

What is a Bundled Payment?

A bundle combines payment for all services provided during the maternity care experience (prenatal, labor and delivery, postpartum) into a single, episode-based payment. This is different from today's fee-for-service reimbursement which pays providers for each individual service.

The bundled payment incentivizes greater coordination of patient-centered care and aims to:

- Reduce maternal mortality
- Improve health outcomes and patient experience
- Improve health equity for birthing people

Program Goals: How will DSS measure success?

DSS will evaluate six key outcome measures with an emphasis on addressing racial disparities.

The aim is to cut racial disparities **in half by 2027** and to **eliminate them for each measure by 2032**.

Key Outcome Measure	2021 Overall Rates	2027 Target Rates
NICU Utilization	8.3%	6.0%
Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS)	2.0%	1.5%
Overall Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)	4.6%	3.3%
Adverse Maternal Outcome	27.5%	24.3%
NTSV (Low-Risk) C-Section	31.5%	25.1%
Overall C-Section	34.4%	30.9%