

## Maternal Health Awareness

The theme of this year's [Maternal Health Awareness Day](#) is *Know Why* – intended to raise awareness about the underlying causes of maternal deaths and emphasize the critical role that data plays in identifying root causes and creating solutions to eliminate poor maternal health outcomes.

Maternal mortality continues to be a major issue in the United States. According to the CDC, over 80% of maternal deaths in our country are preventable. The causes of maternal mortality are numerous and complex. To prevent these tragic deaths (which are occurring at alarming rates), we must understand why they are happening.

Ob Hospitalist Group (OBHG) is committed to preventing pregnancy-related deaths and ensuring the best possible birth outcomes. Here's how:

### Addressing maternal mortality in the hospital

OB hospitalists play an important role in caring for pregnant patients in the hospital. Not only do they manage obstetric emergencies, cover labor and delivery, see unassigned obstetrical patients and back up community providers, but an OB hospitalist's scope of practice has expanded even further to include a greater focus on safety. At OBHG, we recognize that our clinicians are uniquely positioned to be the [maternal safety champion of the entire labor and delivery unit](#).

Addressing maternal mortality is a key focus at OBHG. We share **best practices** with our hospital partners across the U.S. and work with them to implement **standardized protocols** for delivery complications such as preeclampsia. Our teams also **track data** and **partner with hospital leadership** to develop action plans when targets aren't met.

We are also heavily focused on drivers of maternal morbidity and mortality such as cultural bias and maternal mental health. OBHG's Diversity and Inclusion Committee focuses on closing the gaps in care caused by cultural biases while OBHG's Maternal Mental Health Committee works to provide tools to our clinical teams and hospital partners to aid in the identification and treatment of maternal mental health issues.

To combat the growing rate of maternal deaths, OBHG programs help hospitals address [maternal mortality and morbidity](#). Our continual 24/7 coverage in labor and delivery units ensures that emergencies can be handled immediately instead of minutes or hours later. This approach helps reduce the "delay in care" that is associated with harmful events. OBHG clinicians are also well-situated to address issues that arise in



the postpartum period. With clinicians onsite 24/7, care is available for any patient requiring emergency care.

### **Improving maternal access to care in the community**

So that women don't have to travel great distances for maternal care, OBHG's scope has broadened to [help hospitals bridge gaps in care](#). From our experience and success working with hospital partners of all sizes, we know that some hospitals may have most (but not all) of the pieces they need to meet the health care needs of the women in the community.

We are helping hospitals fill in the gaps with custom-designed solutions distinct from our core OB hospitalist model. This may include an extra set of hands in the hospital, to staffing a clinic, to providing coverage from a Certified Nurse Midwife or other provider. Through these solutions, we're proud to help hospitals address maternal mortality and bring care to communities so that more women can receive maternal care close to home.

### **Focusing on quality and data collection**

Data collection across the continuum of care identifies trends in maternal health and establishes benchmarks for quality improvements.

OB hospitalists collect data on fetal heart rate monitoring, C-sections, depression screening, and hypertension, but this is a snapshot in time for a specific point of care.

It's important that healthcare and community organizations collaborate in establishing methods to collaborate and share aggregated data from prenatal through postpartum care to see the impact that interventions have throughout the patient care journey.



To improve maternal health, we all must work together to support women and make sure they get the right care at the right time. If you have ideas on how we can partner together to improve maternal health, [we'd love to hear from you](#).