

# TRAINING AND EDUCATION

## RECOMMENDATION:

### *Training and Education #1*

**Increase the support available to rural pregnant and postpartum women who are experiencing or have a history of SUDs, mental health issues, trauma, and/or intimate partner violence by implementing evidence-based or evidence-informed training like Mom's IMPACTT (IMProving Access to Maternal Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Care Through Telemedicine and Tele-Mentoring) or Postpartum Support International (PSI), broadly within the prenatal and postpartum workforce.**



#### *Action Steps*

- Invest in education and tools for all members of the prenatal and postpartum workforce regarding SUDs, mental health issues, trauma, and/or intimate partner violence among their patient populations.
- Invest in evidence-informed training for rural communities when evidence-based training cannot be utilized.
- Identify and implement incentives for providers to participate in training in areas that will improve patient outcomes.
- Adequately prepare providers within the prenatal and postpartum workforce to screen, educate, and refer prenatal and postpartum women, as needed, on an individual basis.
- Offer moms in rural areas behavioral health care proactively during the prenatal stage to help them begin building relationships with counselors, social workers, psychiatric nurse practitioners, or psychiatrists prior to the postpartum stage.

#### *Context*

There are many behavioral health and external factors that have the potential to negatively impact the health and well-being of moms and babies during and after pregnancy. The second leading cause of maternal deaths from 2018-2021 in South Carolina was mental health conditions/SUDs.<sup>492</sup> As previously discussed in this report, one in every five pregnant or postpartum women are diagnosed with a mental health condition each year, and 20% of deaths in the postpartum period are due to suicide.<sup>493</sup> Also discussed earlier in this report, an SUD diagnosis during pregnancy often ignites fear of repercussions, judgment, and involvement with social services and the justice system among pregnant women.<sup>494</sup>

Another potential concern for prenatal and postpartum providers is awareness of intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV during pregnancy has the potential to cause psychological trauma and other mental health conditions, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as well as physical health issues.<sup>495</sup> Research has suggested a link between IPV during pregnancy and reproductive health complications as well as negative impacts to fetal health.<sup>496</sup> Complications for moms experiencing IPV can include preterm labor, premature rupture of membranes, and vaginal bleeding; fetal health complications can include low birth weight, preterm birth, fetal injury or death, and long-term health consequences for the child.<sup>497</sup> Screening for IPV during prenatal care has been recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and other leading health organizations.<sup>498</sup> ACOG further specifies that IPV screening "should occur at the first prenatal visit, at least once per trimester, and at the postpartum checkup."<sup>499</sup>

This recommendation focuses on providing increased support for prenatal and postpartum women experiencing a range of potential factors that impact the overall health of moms and babies.

There are several programs and/or initiatives that supporting organizations for this recommendation can refer to for planning and implementation assistance. Mom's IMPACTT, a program of MUSC, was designed to assist providers in building capacity to recognize, assess, treat, and/or refer patients with mental health conditions and/or SUDs.<sup>500, vv</sup> This program is free to providers in South Carolina.<sup>501</sup>

Additionally, Postpartum Support International (PSI) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing assistance to women suffering from prenatal and postpartum mood disorders.<sup>ww</sup> PSI has many resources and tools to assist with their mission including a toll-free helpline, newsletters, area support coordinators, online support groups, standardized training and education, free phone chats with experts, and multilingual resources.<sup>502</sup>

Individual health care systems will ultimately need to identify what form of continued education is accessible, feasible, and realistic for their organization. Identifying which program and/or initiative best suits each organization should be considered by administrators in collaboration with the respective prenatal and postpartum workforce.

### *Timeline*

#### **Year 1**

- Supporting and leading organizations will identify organizations and providers in rural areas willing to participate in educational training related to SUDs, mental health issues, trauma, and/or intimate partner violence.
- Organizations and individual providers should consult with administrators of Mom's IMPACTT and/or PSI for educational training opportunities in South Carolina.
- Supporting organizations will work to identify evidence-informed initiatives that are applicable to specific rural areas where evidence-based programs may not be available and/or applicable.

#### **Year 3**

- Baseline data should be reviewed to establish a way to evaluate the ongoing efforts of this recommendation's supporters and implementers.
- Continue to identify providers in the prenatal and postpartum workforce to participate in continuing education related to SUDs, mental health issues, trauma, and/or IPV.

#### **Year 5**

- Evaluate impacts on health outcomes.

### *Supporting Organizations<sup>xx</sup>*

- The Beloved Early Education & Care (BEE) Collective
- Healthy Start
- Hive Community Circle
- March of Dimes
- Medical University of South Carolina
- Postpartum Support International SC Chapter
- South Carolina Area Health Education Consortium
- South Carolina Christian Action Council
- South Carolina Community Health Worker Association
- South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services
- South Carolina Department of Corrections
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- South Carolina Department of Mental Health
- South Carolina Infant Mental Health Association
- University of South Carolina School of Medicine
- Community mental health centers
- Community partner violence programs
- Rural health organizations
- Faith-based health organizations

<sup>vv</sup> Additional information on Mom's IMPACTT can be found within the "Successful Programs" chapter of this report.

<sup>ww</sup> Additional information on PSI can be found within the "Successful Programs" chapter of this report.

<sup>xx</sup> A supporting organization is not required to take action to execute the recommendation, but the designation means that if the recommendation is implemented the organization may be able to provide some support, whether advising, participating in the work, or contributing to implementation in another way.