Commitment to Action: Eliminating Preventable Maternal Mortality


On Maternal Health Awareness Day, ACOG, with support from CDC, joins with other specialty organizations in a commitment to help eliminate preventable maternal mortality. Specifically, this multidisciplinary effort will address readiness in prehospital, emergency department, primary care, and urgent care settings to identify and manage obstetric emergencies during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

Approximately 700 U.S. women die each year from pregnancy-related causes, and non-Hispanic Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women have higher rates of pregnancy-related deaths than women of other racial and ethnic groups.¹ Approximately one in three pregnancy-related deaths occur one week to one year after delivery.² Underlying causes of pregnancy-related deaths in the 12-month postpartum period can include cardiovascular conditions (such as cardiomyopathy), hypertensive emergencies (such as preeclampsia, eclampsia, and stroke), and conditions related to mental health (such as suicide and overdose). Patients who develop signs or symptoms of these conditions may utilize Emergency Medical Services and/or present for care in emergency departments, urgent care facilities, or in primary care settings. Our organizations have joined together in this multidisciplinary effort to raise awareness about the risk of pregnancy-related emergencies in the 12-month postpartum period and highlight the critical role that practitioners who care for patients in non-obstetric practice settings play in recognizing and managing these emergencies.

The goals of this multidisciplinary effort include:

- Increasing awareness of the critical role of non-obstetric health care professionals in reducing maternal mortality;
- Improving identification of patients who are pregnant or have been pregnant in the last 12 months in non-obstetric settings where these patients may present for care; and
• Enhancing understanding among non-obstetric health care professionals to facilitate recognition of signs/symptoms of obstetric emergencies and readiness to stabilize or treat patients who present outside the obstetric setting.

We commit to working collaboratively to identify opportunities to enhance health care professional education and resources related to the goals expressed above, and we invite the members of our organizations to join us in raising awareness about this important effort to improve maternal health outcomes in our nation.

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