



Commission on Maternal and Infant Health

October 30, 2025 9:30am-11:00am Virtual via Microsoft Teams

NOTES

Attendees: Champa Woodham, Marlo Vernon, Keisha Callins, Shae Evans, Rep. Karen Bennett, Kimberly Ross, Tim Denning

Welcome (2 minutes)

Dr. Woodham opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Growing Physicians for Georgia's Future

Presenter: Laurie Ott, Georgia Higher Education Healthcare Initiative (see attached presentation)

More information: www.gahehi.org/our-findings

Discussion highlights:

- Forty-two states leverage Medicaid funding for graduate medical education (GME).
- Florida provides a model by using 40% state funds and 60% through intergovernmental transfers, allowing federal matching. Georgia could receive \$2 for every \$1 invested.
- Leveraging Medicaid for GME does not reduce resources for Medicaid patients.
- Improving both the **quantity and quality of residency training** is essential, but how we train medical students also affects whether they remain in Georgia to practice.
- **MAG House of Delegates** passed a resolution to leverage Medicaid to expand physician training in Georgia.
- Georgia has potentially missed out on **\$1–3 billion in GME-related Medicaid funds** over the past decade.
- ACGME's procedural limits may restrict the ability to add residency slots; the Commission discussed exploring these barriers.
- Discussion on **UGA's medical school expansion**: increasing graduates may not address workforce shortages if residency slots remain limited—many graduates leave the state.
- Need to encourage graduates to return to Georgia and increase **state legislative support for medical research funding**, which helps attract trainees.

DPH Home Visiting Program

Presenter: Christina Tice, CNM, Georgia Department of Public Health (see attached presentation)

Discussion highlights:

- **Safe Sleep practices** are part of the program.
- **Mental health referral data** will be provided later by Ms. Tice.
- Developmental follow-up can be difficult for rural families due to distance from Regional Perinatal Centers (RPCs).

- **NICU referrals:** frequency of follow-up varies by need; may begin twice weekly and taper over time. Information is shared with the child's DPC and/or pediatrician.
- Participation is **free** and open to all income levels
- **Program wish list:** statewide coverage, more staff, and stronger provider awareness to increase referrals (provider-referred families tend to stay engaged).
- **Maternal outcomes:** Data on maternal mortality impacts are forthcoming. Members noted that most maternal deaths occur between 6 weeks and 1 year postpartum, indicating this program could be a potential *"game changer"* for Georgia's maternal mortality rates.

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Georgia

Presenter: Margaret Master, MBA, MPH, CHES (see attached presentation)

Recommendations discussed:

- Raise awareness of **pregnancy Medicaid extension** and **presumptive eligibility**.
- Protect and expand **prenatal access** in communities affected by hospital closures.
- Close **coverage gaps** through Medicaid policy improvements.
- Invest in **maternal mental health** and **substance use infrastructure**.
- Leverage **technology** to connect families to existing programs.
- Include **maternal health** among protected categories as the legislature considers replacement funding.

Additional discussion:

- Access to **quality nutrition** is key—food-as-medicine initiatives and WIC participation can help reduce low birthweight and high blood pressure.
- Prenatal visits often lack sufficient time to cover nutrition, so supplemental programs should emphasize this more.

Next Steps (4 minutes)

- A **Microsoft Team** has been created for Commission members.
- The Team includes meeting materials and reference documents to support development of the Commission's recommendations report.
- The Team name is **"DPH Commission on Maternal and Infant Health"** (Microsoft automatically adds "DPH" to the name).
- Additional topics of interest will be shared via the Team due to limited meeting time.
- DPH's overview of pregnancy resource center funding is located in the September folder.