

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health Care Finance



Office of the Senior Deputy Director and
Medicaid Director

MDL #22-04

MEDICAID DIRECTOR LETTER

TO: All Interested Parties

DATE: September 26, 2022

SUBJECT: **Perinatal Mental Health Task Force**

Purpose: This Medicaid Director Letter serves as the announcement for the stakeholder engagement and agency action on perinatal mental health, sets the scope, structure, and application process for the DHCF Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce, and directs stakeholders on ways to contact and submit comments to the agency on ways to improve services and coverage related to perinatal mental health in advance of upcoming meetings.

Perinatal Health Task Force: In the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Support Act of 2022, DC Council establishes a Perinatal Mental Health Task Force to provide comprehensive policy recommendations for improving perinatal mental health in the District. The Task Force shall study and make recommendations to the Council by August 31, 2023, regarding the following:

- Vulnerable populations and risk factors for perinatal mental health disorders;
- Evidence-based and promising practices for those with or at risk of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders;
- Barriers to access to care during the perinatal period for birthing people and their partners and identifying evidence-based and promising practices for care coordination, systems navigation, and case management services that address and eliminate barriers to accessing care and care utilization for birthing people and their partners;
- Evidence-informed practices that are culturally congruent and accessible to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities that exist in addressing prevention, screening, diagnosis, intervention, and treatment, and recovery from perinatal mood and anxiety disorders;
- National and global models that successfully promote access to care, including screening, diagnosis, intervention, treatment, recovery, and prevention services for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders in the pregnant or postpartum person and non-birthing partner;
- Community-based or multigenerational practices that support individuals and families affected by a maternal mental health condition;
- Successful initiatives regarding workforce development encompassing the hiring, training, and retention of a behavioral health care workforce as it relates to perinatal mental health, including maximizing non-traditional behavioral health supports such as peer support and community health workers;
- Models for private and public funding of perinatal mental health initiatives; and

- A landscape analysis of available perinatal mental health programs, treatments, and services, and notable innovations and gaps in care provision and coordination, encompassing the ability to serve the diversity of perinatal experiences of unique populations, including Black birthing people, Hispanic birthing people, pregnant and postpartum people of color, perinatal immigrant populations, adolescents who are pregnant and parenting, LGBTQIA+.

Task Force Membership Composition: The Task Force will comprise at least 21 members. Six members will be from the government sector representing

- Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services;
- Director of the Department of Behavioral Health;
- Director of the Department of Health;
- Director of the Department of Health Care Finance;
- Chairperson of the Council's Committee on Health;
- Chairperson of the Council's Committee on Human Services.

The remaining members will represent the following:

- At least four (4) members of the community or advocates and meet at least one (1) of the following standards:
 - An individual with current or past perinatal mood and anxiety disorders;
 - A caregiver or partner to those with current or past perinatal mood and anxiety disorders; or
 - An advocate informed about perinatal mental health in the District, who is also a beneficiary of perinatal mood or anxiety disorder treatment
- At least one representative from a managed care organization contracted in the District;
- At least 3 representatives from nonprofit health centers serving birthing populations;
- A registered nurse experienced in providing perinatal mental health services in the District;
- A licensed pediatrician experienced in providing perinatal mental health services in the District;
- An obstetrician experienced in providing perinatal mental health services in the District;
- A licensed clinical psychologist or psychiatrist with experience providing perinatal mental health services in the District;
- A doula;
- One of the following:
 - A certified midwife practicing in the District;
 - A certified nurse-midwife practicing in the District; or
 - A certified professional midwife practicing in the District; and
- A representative of a home visiting program operating in the District.

Application to the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force: Applicants to the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force will be selected on their knowledge and experience of perinatal mental health services, ability to fairly represent organizations, providers, or others in a similar position, ability to be a regular participant, and their ability to fit the criteria listed above.

Applications should be filled out at this [link](#)

You may contact dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov if you have any technical difficulties. Applicants will be notified by email of their selection.

Task Force Meetings and Expectations: All Task Force meetings will be open to the public. Task Force members may consult on meeting agendas and will be given preference to speak in certain

call segments. Members will be expected to attend monthly virtual public meetings, potential subcommittee work, and preparation for meetings from November 2022 – September 2023.

Stakeholder Outreach: DHCF intends to conduct stakeholder outreach on perinatal health projects through public comment at the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force Interest Meeting, verbal feedback at Task Force meetings, and written comments collected by email.

Perinatal Mental Health Task Force Interest Meeting: The virtual October 12th Medicaid Perinatal Mental Health Task Force Interest Meeting will share expected agency action with the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force over the next fiscal year, describe the draft structure and application process for the Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce and its work, and afford the public an opportunity to comment on the task force's direction on Perinatal Mental Health. The Interest Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 12, 2022, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM**. Individuals are encouraged to attend the Interest Meeting through the computer, by using the Webex link below. Individuals may also access the meeting through the phone, dial 1-202-860-2110 and then enter Phone Conference ID: 23198182862#.

<https://dncet.webex.com/dncet/j.php?MTID=m770714ff173188fa5055785bb57d1a58>

Meeting number (access code): 2319 818 2862

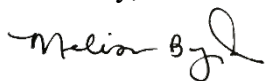
Meeting password: 3N3Cc5TfvaW

For more information on the Interest Meeting or if you are unable to attend, please contact or provide written comments to dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov.

Contact: Those interested in receiving notice of future meetings and policy action from DHCF or removing themselves from being contacted are encouraged to email dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov stating a wish to enroll or disenroll from the mailing list.

Comments: Those who want to comment on Perinatal Mental Health Projects outside of the Interest Meeting and Perinatal Health Task Force are encouraged to submit written comments to dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov. The comments will be distributed and reviewed by agency staff developing the recommendation regarding perinatal mental health and passed to the Task Force.

Sincerely,



Melisa Byrd
Senior Deputy Director/Medicaid Director

Cc: DC Hospital Association
DC Primary Care Association
DC Health Care Association
DC Home Health Association
DC Behavioral Health Association
DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers
Medical Society of DC