NICHQ National Institute for Children's Health Quality

Insights

Case Studies Show Improved Birth Outcomes and Cost Savings

C-sections financed by Medicaid, on average, cost nearly $5,000 more than vaginal births. With state Medicaid agencies financing nearly half of all births each year, improving birth outcomes is a priority.

A 50-state environmental scan of strategies to improve women's access to high quality preventive and perinatal care—released earlier this year in coordination with the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP)—mapped state Medicaid efforts to improve birth outcomes. The scan revealed numerous innovative initiatives, many providing healthcare cost savings, which are the focus of three new case studies.

- **Oklahoma Case Study**: The Oklahoma Health Care Authority focused its efforts on reducing elective C-sections without medical indication. As of 2016, Oklahoma had reduced the rate of primary C-sections without medical indication to 15.6 percent, resulting in substantial cost savings to the state. Read how
- **Wisconsin Case Study:** The Wisconsin Department of Health Services focused its efforts on reducing birth disparities through effective, comprehensive, coordinated and quality maternity care. The program results indicate an improvement in the rate of postpartum care visits from 61.4% in 2013 to 85.5% in 2015. Read how
- **Tennessee Case Study:** Tennessee's Department of Human Services' Division of TennCare (Medicaid) has implemented a perinatal episode of care that focuses on women with low to medium risk pregnancies. As a result, Tennessee has seen a 3.4 percent decrease in care cost, a total of about $4.7 million, in calendar year 2014-2015. (case study coming soon)

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“These case studies demonstrate that states working to improve birth outcomes have an opportunity to forge successful cross-agency collaborations,” says NICHQ Executive Project Director Pat Heinrich, RN, MSN, CLE. “When collaborating partners, like state health departments and Medicaid, have a common aim and shared goals that is when we see the best results.”

Improving birth outcomes is an essential step in every child achieving their optimal health—NICHQ’s vision. Learn more about the multiple initiatives where NICHQ is working with states to encourage innovative system reform to support better outcomes for mothers and babies, while reducing overall healthcare costs.