

## **Ohio's Statewide Strong Start Initiative for Improving Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes**

**Background:** The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (Innovation Center) recently announced the *Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns* Funding Opportunity, which focuses on reducing preterm birth rates for at risk Medicaid and Medicaid eligible women.

Up to \$43 million will be available to fund the cost of enhanced prenatal service delivery for approximately 30,000 pregnant Medicaid and Medicaid eligible women annually in one of the three options outlined in the funding opportunity, targeting approximately 90,000 women over three years. Each option should have the annual capacity to serve **500** at risk Medicaid and Medicaid eligible women. Each approach must also provide specific, comprehensive interventions to improve current, traditional prenatal care delivery **and** innovative models to address additional clinical, behavioral, and psychosocial factors that may be present during pregnancy and contribute to preterm-related poor birth outcomes. **This initiative will focus specifically on the impact of non-medical prenatal interventions that when provided – in addition to routine obstetrical medical care – are believed to reduce rates of preterm births for these women.**

To capitalize on the ongoing efforts in the state to address prenatal care and birth outcomes for Ohio's Medicaid and Medicaid eligible population, the State of Ohio will submit a single, statewide Strong Start application.

While the evidenced-based approaches being tested in this initiative are encapsulated in 3 options for applicants, the State of Ohio has chosen to pursue the following **two** options in the statewide Strong Start application:

- **Enhanced Prenatal Care through Centering/Group Care** – Group prenatal care that incorporates peer-to-peer support in facilitated, face-to-face sessions for three components: health assessment, education, and support occurring within approximately 10 prenatal sessions. This approach focuses on building peer-support relationships; and
- **Enhanced Prenatal Care at Maternity Care Homes** – Enhanced prenatal care including psychosocial support, education, and health promotion in addition to traditional prenatal care. In this approach, services are delivered in practices described as maternity care homes.

**Potential Partners:** Ohio Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Health will advance existing partnerships with the Ohio Collaborative to Prevent Infant Mortality, the Ohio Perinatal Quality Collaborative, the Ohio Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologist (ACOG), the Ohio Chapter of March of Dimes, key Ohio medical colleges, health systems, and others to submit a statewide Strong Start proposal. Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center (GRC) will assist the State with planning, coordination and proposal development for the Strong Start application.

**Potential Provider Partners:** Ohio's centering sites, academic medical centers and affiliated practices, children's hospitals, maternity hospitals, primary care providers, OBGYNs, APNs, healthcare, and social service providers are encouraged to collaborate on the care model.

**Status:** The Ohio Strong Start Team receives to date at least 16 proposals, and continues to receive partnering interests from care innovators representing diverse regions (Appalachian, rural and urban concentration), demographics, providers, and beneficiaries in Ohio. The State Team is working under a very compressed timeline to put the State's proposal together. The proposal is due to CMS by June 13, 2012.