Gestating & Rebirthing a Community-based Maternity Program – A System-wide Partnership

Tiffany A. Moore Simas, MD, MPH, MEd; Julia V. Johnson, MD; Ellen Delpapa, MD; Maria Narducci, MD; Charles Cavagnaro, MD; Eric Dickson, MD, MHCM*; Terrence Flotte, MD*

University of Massachusetts Medical School/UMass Memorial Health Care, Worcester, MA

Presented at the 2020 ELAM© Leaders Forum

### Background

- U.S. with rising maternal mortality rate
- Many factors contribute including decreased access
- High fixed costs & decreasing reimbursement challenge the sustainability of low volume maternity units
- Patient safety and quality affected by:
  - ↓ delivery volumes preventing maintenance of competencies
  - ↓ access secondary to fewer maternity units
- Volume and distance are often indirectly related
- Recruiting and retaining talent to low volume institutions is a challenge
- Conversations & literature address these concerns yet

The UMMHC HealthAlliance-Clinton Hospital Birthing Center was focus of a Harvard School of Public Health case that outlined related problems. Solutions to revive in exemplary patient and provider experiences that resulting financial health of the clinical system.

### Objective

This project aims to improve Maternal-Child Services in exemplary patient and provider experiences that resulting financial health of the clinical system.

### Approach

- Perform market analysis, benchmarking, and focus groups to identify strengths & opportunities
- Establish data collection approach & track relevant metrics monthly
- Hire obstetric care providers (Ob/Gyn & Family)
- Improve quality and re-initiate trial of labor offering (all pass e-module series, code drills, TeamSTEPPS, update policies/procedures)
- Improve quality and marketability by establishing on-site MFM consultation and ultrasonography
- Institute real-time discharge survey to augment Press-Ganey info on patient & provider experience
- Establish facilities plan for physical plant refresh
- Design & implement marketing/branding campaign

### Results

- Multifaceted project launched with accomplishments achieved in all domains (Figure 1)
- Focus groups completed and analyzed with results incorporated into recovery plans
- Quality efforts actively implemented resulting in:
  - Approval to reinitiate TOLAC
  - Approval for on-site MFM consults and US
- Public relations, marketing and branding campaign initiated (Figure 2)
- Relevant metrics identified and tracked monthly – 60 deliveries/month goal established
- Figure 3 – actual deliveries per month
- Figure 4 – projected deliveries through 2020

### Discussion

- Significant efforts invested by system-wide core team with associated accomplishments realized
- Obsetrics associated with ~9 mos interval from initiative to realized impact (and causality difficulty to ascribe)
- Upward trendline in actual FY2020 deliveries towards goal of 60/mos with projection of achieving 60+ deliveries in Dec 2020
- Quality efforts resulted in on-site ambulatory MFM care and approval to reinitiate TOLACs but not offered yet
- Real-time surveys associated with positive feedback; increase in positive stories; both being distributed through marketing & public relations campaign
- Significant challenges encountered which have delayed initiatives & anticipated progress:
  - COVID-19 pandemic
  - Nursing union contract negotiations
  - Late start new physicians; limited nursing and surgical tech staff

### Conclusion

Significant investment of efforts and finances have resulted in the implementation of initiatives designed to revive a community maternity/birthing center. Metrics correlate with improvement in delivery volume towards initial goal. Additional improvements needed in delivery volume, quality, patient/provider experiences, and finances for sustainability.

---

*Grateful appreciation to UMMHS Dean and Provost Flotte and UMMHC CEO and President Dr. Dickson for their support and mentorship. Special thanks to Karen Zhou for her project management support and expertise which was instrumental in consistent advancement of this project.*