



Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures Task Force Meeting Notes -- DRAFT

August 22, 2025

Patrick Henry Building, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Members Present: VDH Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton (Co-Chair), DMAS Director Cheryl Roberts, Senator Tara Durant, Delegate Amanda Batten, Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant (Co-Chair), Nicole Lawter, Ildiko Baugus, George Saade, Eric Reynolds, Jumelie Miller, Leah Kipley, Shannon Pursell, Julie Bilodeau, Kelly Cannon, Niki Cox, Shelia Talbott, Paula Tomko, Hannah Matty (Designee for Kyle Russell), and Kathy Haines (Designee for Pamela Pilch)

Members Present Virtually: Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata, Heidi Dix, Dr. Daphne Bazile, Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato, Dr. Lee Ouyang, Dr. Melanie Rouse, Joely Mauck, Stephanie Spencer, Mandolin Restivo, Dr. Kurt Elward, and Gabriela Ammatuna

Health and Human Resources Staff: Leah Mills, HHR; Mindy Diaz, HHR; Melanie Cruz, Virginia Management Fellow; Cheryl Oppan, HHR

Opening Remarks and Member Introductions: Leah Mills, Deputy Secretary, Health and Human Resources

Deputy Secretary Mills welcomed Task Force members and thanked them for their participation. She acknowledged Commissioner Dr. Karen Shelton, Director Cheryl Roberts, and recognized Senator Tara Durant, Delegate Amanda Batten, and Delegate Anne Ferrell Tata. She commended VDH and DMAS for their work and efforts throughout the taskforce. Deputy Secretary Mills then introduced Commissioner Shelton to provide opening remarks.

Task Force Welcome: Dr. Karen Shelton, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Health

Commissioner Shelton welcomed Task Force members and noted the previous meeting's focus on cannabis use during pregnancy. She recognized virtual attendees, state legislators, and Health and Human Resources staff. Commissioner Shelton introduced Dr. Brittany Keegan from the VCU Center for Public Policy (CPP) to review the maternal health survey findings and recommendations as well as lead the provider panel discussion.

Maternal Health Survey Findings and Recommendations: Dr. Brittany Keegan, VCU Center for Public Policy

Dr. Brittany Keegan provided a brief synopsis of each section outlined in the survey. The survey received 26 total responses, and a key takeaway was access to maternal health services in rural areas. Expanding support and resources for maternal health deserts was a top priority for the Task Force as they address upcoming challenges and unmet needs. Promoting maternal mental health and addressing substance use, particularly cannabis use, were also top priorities.

Under policy and program recommendations, financial resources to support maternal health in rural areas and increasing transportation access and childcare options for pregnant women in underserved regions were identified top priorities. Shannon Pursell commented on the survey emphasizing the importance of focusing on data quality measures and not duplicating findings from other maternal health taskforce meetings. She noted that the title of the survey should be changed to Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures Survey rather than Maternal Health Task Force Survey.

Provider Panel Participants:

Dr. Daphne Bazile, *Obstetrician and Gynecologist, Bon Secours (Virtual)*

Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato, *Obstetrician and Gynecologist, Carilion Clinic (Virtual)*

Dr. Richard Lucidi, *Obstetrician and Gynecologist, VCU Health*

Christina Jennings, *Certified Women's Health Nurse Practitioner, Virginia Department of Health, Chickahominy Health District*

Kate Hulbert, *Certified Nurse Midwife, VCU Health*

Ildiko Baugus, *Certified Professional Midwife & Licensed Midwife, Meraki Midwives*

Provider Panel Questions:

- What trends are you seeing in the data for maternal health care?
 - Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato
 - No significant reimbursement rates for telehealth visits
 - Do not have enough staff to support the current increase or decrease of patients, particularly in Southwest Virginia
 - Lack of care coordination and navigators
 - Dr. Daphne Bazile
 - Facing challenges with people getting their information from social media rather than trusted sources
 - Christina Jennings
 - There is a need for care in Goochland County
 - Ildiko Baugus
 - Patients cannot afford insurance
 - Portsmouth is considered a maternity care desert
- What resources do you need to better support women in underserved areas, especially in maternity health deserts?
 - Ildiko Baugus
 - Being able to get all the resources for each patient including maternal medicine, OB care, etc.
 - More training for paramedics for dealing with postpartum mental health challenges
 - Reimbursement for substance use disorder screening and domestic violence screening
 - Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato
 - Need to invest in care navigation otherwise collecting data alone is insufficient; we need to come up with strategic plans to address on the ground challenges
 - Christina Jennings
 - Patients may have difficulty communicating with medical staff
 - Patients may be unable to communicate their needs
 - We need to address mental health care and provide resources to address those challenges
 - Dr. Richard Lucidi
 - Pre-conception care is also essential, ensuring women are taking their vitamins, screening for medical issues, etc.
 - Dr. Lee Ouyang

- Can we quantify how many people need resources so we can bring concrete statistics to legislators?
- What are some things Virginia could do to expand access to care in rural areas and minoritized populations?
 - Christina Jennings
 - Financial resources
 - Kate Hulbert
 - More postpartum visits, only one is provided now but at least two would be beneficial
- What are some of the other reasons patients miss pre-natal or postpartum patients?
 - Kate Hulbert
 - Childcare and transportation are barriers for not coming to appointments
 - Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato
 - Not having broadband service is an issue for telehealth appointments in rural areas
 - Financial infrastructure in localities that don't have service
 - Dr. Lee Ouyang
 - Accessing medical appointments during the work week is challenging
- What types of data would be useful to assist in your practice?
 - Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato
 - I would love to see data on those who have signed sterilization forms
 - Annual visits coded for pre-conception counseling
 - Data does not include other conversations that need to be captured such as former conditions that impact the future health of the patient

Provider Panel Discussion:

- Shannon Pursell
 - We have a maternal morbidity workgroup, so we have an opportunity to look at maternal mortality
 - Reimbursement and financial resources have come up several times and there are multiple funding streams that are in use and accessible
 - Several recommendations that came up in the meeting today were present in 2024; ensure that people are aware of the 2024 recommendations
 - Optimizing postpartum care would be an ideal step for moving forward
- Stephanie Spencer
 - How are the providers on the panel currently utilizing the resources available in the community today? How are current resources in the community being used?
 - Do integrated models include MCO care coordinators, doulas, peer support specialists, doulas, home visiting or maternal health hubs? What are the barriers providers have experienced when it comes to accessing these resources?
- What does the current data show regarding the utilization of current services and programming?
 - Dr. Lee Ouyang
 - We currently do not have an answer to that problem, but it is certainly something to think about
 - Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato
 - It is important to collect data in a more meaningful way; data is wonderful, but it may not account for those near misses/ close calls
 - Outcome data and lack of implementation on the bedside is a struggle. We lack the infrastructure to provide quality care at the bedside
 - The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends providers see their patients within two weeks of birth, but this can be difficult because OBGYNs do not have capacity for this
- Delegate Amanda Batten

- What are the health risks and outcomes for women who have a planned pregnancy versus an unplanned pregnancy?
 - Dr. Jaclyn Nunziato
 - As providers, we need to do a better job of educating our patients about reproductive health planning
- Christina Jennings
 - The passion and energy we all pour into maternity care is impressive, however, there is a cost. Providers work themselves to the point of exhaustion. Providers are affected on a personal level

Closing Remarks:

Dr. Keegan thanked the panelists and members for joining and sharing their thoughts.

Dr. Dunnivant stated that when we seek to translate medical experience into moving the policy needle, we need data. As legislators, we need clear guidance and data. Interconnected care is the golden egg to achieve better outcomes, and we must emphasize regional efforts moving forward. Additionally, access to mental health care is a challenge. People should be referred to mental health resources so we can track how many people are being referred. To conclude, we must translate the language of clinical care in a way that legislators can understand and better meet the needs and challenges of maternal health providers.

Commissioner Shelton thanked the Task Force members for their attendance and participation. She stated the next meeting was on September 24th, 2025, at 10am and would be held at VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital.