

## **Saving Moms: A Maternal Mortality Review Initiative**

The Maternal Mortality Review Initiative is an effort to prevent future deaths by better understanding the reasons behind the growing number of deaths of mothers within the first year after giving birth. A Maternal Mortality Amendment to the current Fetal, Infant, and Child Mortality Prevention Act is a low cost mechanism that will allow for a formal review of Montana maternal mortality utilizing the existing local FICMR team infrastructure.

### **The Issue**

The death of mothers after the first year of giving birth has increased in Montana and across the United States.

In Montana, there were 18 maternal deaths (4 or 5 suicides; 6 vehicle crashes) over the two year period of 2010 – 2011. This is a striking increase over the 5 deaths that occurred on 2009, and the one maternal death average per year from 1980 – 2008.

The reasons for the increase are unknown. Due to the alarming increase across the United States, there is an effort to establish in Montana, and 15 other states, a formal process to review maternal deaths. Such a process currently exists in the 34 states and considered a best practice. This approach also has national support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Maternal & Child Health (MCH).

The death rate for both the state of Montana and the United States in 2009 was 13.7 deaths per 100,000. The increase in the death rate has driven the CDC to set a nationwide goal to reduce that rate to 11.4 deaths per 100,000 by 2020.

There is clear need to improve maternal care safety and quality in Montana. Clinically, the management issue of severe postpartum depression resulting in suicide must be addressed.

### **A Solution**

Montana is fortunate to have a process already in place that can be adjusted to include maternal mortality reviews. The Fetal, Infant, and Child Mortality Prevention Act allows for the creation of local teams, driven by our local public health professionals, to review the deaths of infants. There are 28 FICMR teams operating across Montana, most of which are comprised of representatives from several counties and some tribal reservations.

Adding maternal mortality to the cases that can be reviewed by these local FICMR teams is a step in the right direction to gain better understanding as to why mothers are dying in increasing numbers.

Adding the “M” to FICMR by amending the Fetal, Infant, and Child Mortality Prevention Act , starting at 50-19-401, MCA will establish a process and would avoid the creation of a duplicative process with added costs. It addresses the CDC/MCH requested maternal review need and takes advantage of an already existing infrastructure, established FICMR teams in our communities.

The proposed Amendment would be budget neutral as cases would be reviewed by existing local FICMR teams. Confidentiality of records is already provided under 50-19-404, MCA.

The proposed Amendment provides the needed review, infrastructure, and the clinical correlation of the existing Montana DPHHS statistics to improve maternal care safety and quality.

### **Strong Support**

The Amendment is supported by the Montana Medical Association, Montana ACOG Section, Montana Academy of Family Physicians, Montana Academy of Pediatrics, Billings Clinic and other health care providers.

### **Contact for Additional Information**

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