



Enhance Postpartum Services to Improve Maternal Health

More than half of pregnancy-related deaths occur one week to one year after pregnancy, and more than 80 percent of these deaths are preventable. Quality postpartum care also contributes to the long-term health and well-being of the client and baby. This job aid presents high impact practices for postpartum services in the outpatient sexual and reproductive health setting, along with resources to support implementation.

★ *Indicates a key practice*

Readiness

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Develop and maintain a set of referral resources, and foster communication with other health and social service providers to enhance services and support for postpartum clients.	Local Resource List
Educate staff on why and how to recognize urgent maternal warning signs in the postpartum period.	Recognizing Urgent Maternal Warning Signs in the Postpartum Period Meeting Package
Develop and implement a standard comprehensive postpartum visit template.	
Train staff on strategies to mitigate the impact of biases to enhance equitable care.	Cultural Competency and Humility in Family Planning Care: Embracing Culture eLearning Reducing the Impact of Unconscious Bias in Family Planning Care eLearning

Recognition and Prevention

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Collaborate with partners to establish care plans for management of chronic health conditions and pregnancy-related complications. Plans should include a system for scheduling the postpartum care visit prior to birthing unit discharge, or within 24 hours of discharge when applicable.	The Fourth Trimester of Pregnancy: Committing to Maternal Health and Well-Being Postpartum
Collaborate with partners to offer contraceptive counseling and services prior to birthing unit discharge.	Client-Centered Contraceptive Counseling Skills eLearning
★ Assess and document if a client is pregnant or has been pregnant within the past year. Ask the screening question, “Are you pregnant, or have you been pregnant in the past 12 months?”	Recognize Postpartum Warning Signs Poster Reconoce los signos de advertencia del posparto, póster
★ Screen each client who has been pregnant in the past 12 months for postpartum risk factors, and connect clients with community services/resources as appropriate.	MSS Prenatal Risk Factor Clarification Table Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health Screening Tools
★ Screen for structural and social drivers of health that might impact clinical recommendations or treatment plans. Link clients to resources that align with their health literacy, cultural needs, and language proficiency.	Addressing Social Determinants of Health in Family Planning Care Meeting Package The PRAPARE Screening Tool

Response

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Educate clients who have been pregnant within the past 12 months on urgent maternal warning signs and how to access care.	Urgent Maternal Warning Signs Educational Materials Signs and Symptoms of Urgent Maternal Warning Signs
Conduct a comprehensive postpartum visit when indicated.	Optimizing Postpartum Care
Encourage the presence of a designated support person when providing postpartum care, particularly when educating a client.	Providing Support for Pregnant or Postpartum People
Offer reproductive life planning discussions and resources, including access to a full range of contraceptive options for which the client is medically eligible.	Determining Your Client's Need for Services and Discussing Reproductive Goals eLearning Client-Centered Reproductive Goals and Counseling Flow Chart Client-Centered Contraceptive Counseling Process Job Aid
Discuss self-care elements with postpartum clients.	4th Trimester Project Postpartum Health and Self-Care Resources Your Postpartum Plan

Reporting and Systems Learning

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Regularly convene providers to share successful strategies and identify opportunities for preventing undesired postpartum outcomes. Include emergency and urgent care clinicians and staff.	4th Trimester Project Postpartum in Practice
Monitor outcomes and process data related to postpartum services. Disaggregate data by race and ethnicity.	High Impact Practice Set (HIPS) for Outpatient Settings: Enhance Postpartum Services to Improve Maternal Health Measurement Tool

Respectful, Equitable, and Supportive Care

HIGH IMPACT PRACTICE	RESOURCE
Provide client-centered, trauma-informed communication and counseling to support the client in understanding recommendations and options.	OARS Model—Essential Communication Skills Job Aid Trauma-Informed Care Toolkit for Title X Agencies

These practices were adapted from [Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health \(AIM\) Patient Safety Bundles](#) by the RHNTC in collaboration with the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists \(ACOG\)](#). [Postpartum Discharge Transition](#). (2022).

This job aid was supported by the Office on Women's Health (Grant ASTWH200090). The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.