



**Smooth Transitions™**  
**Quality Improvement Program**

How Midwives, Hospitals, EMS, and  
Birthing Families All Benefit

**NACPM Webinar**  
**April 24, 2023**



**FOUNDATION FOR**  
**Health Care Quality**

# Smooth Transitions

## **Mission:**

To address our **shared responsibility** for improving hospital transfers from planned community-based births to promote greater patient safety and satisfaction.

## **Goals:**

- Improve **whole person safety\*** and efficiency of the transfer process through the establishment of system-wide protocols
- Collect and analyze transfer outcome data for the purpose of quality improvement
- Build greater collaboration between community-based midwives, EMS, and hospital care team
- Enhance the patient experience of care when transfers occur

# **Smooth Transitions Quality Improvement Program**

- **Launched in 2009  
under the auspices of  
the Washington State  
Perinatal Collaborative**
- **Since 2018, it has been  
housed at the  
Foundation for Health  
Care Quality**
- **21 hospitals currently  
participating in the  
program; 7 additional  
hospitals are  
onboarding**

# Smooth Transitions



- ❖ Foundation for Health Care Quality – OB COAP
- ❖ Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA)
- ❖ Midwives' Association of Washington State (MAWS)
- ❖ Washington State Obstetrical Association (WSOA)
- ❖ Washington Chapter of AWHONN
- ❖ Washington State Department of Health (DOH)
- ❖ Washington Affiliate of the ACNM
- ❖ American Institutes for Research (AIR) grant
- ❖ Washington Alliance for Responsible Midwifery (WARM)
- ❖ OB Hospitalist Group, Inc (OBHG)
- ❖ Yellow Chair Foundation

# Smooth Transitions

## Program Components

- ❖ **Initial hospital presentation**
- ❖ Co-creation of transfer protocols
- ❖ Perinatal Transfer Committee meetings
- ❖ Qualitative data collection through 360-degree surveys -
- ❖ Creative problem-solving to improve quality of care and patient experience

# LICENSED MIDWIVES IN WASHINGTON STATE

Washington's Licensed Midwives (LMs) are part of our healthcare system



3500+ births per year (more than 4 percent of all births) are attended by the 175+ licensed midwives in Washington State.



Work in the state's 20+ licensed freestanding birth centers and in homes.



Can accept most insurance, including Medicaid. Liability insurance is available (IM/3M policies).



Licensed and regulated by the Washington State Department of Health.



Attend an accredited 3-year midwifery education program or the equivalent. Programs meet or exceed requirements set by the International Confederation of Midwives and the North American Registry of Midwives.

Must attend a minimum of **100 births** under supervision during clinical training.

## Licensed Midwives Provide Comprehensive, Family-Centered Care



## Q&A

### WHO CAN LMs CARE FOR?

LMs are autonomous providers who typically care for low-risk parents and babies during the normal childbearing cycle.

### HOW IS RISK EVALUATED, AND WHEN DO LMs CONSIDER TRANSFER OF CARE?

Professional midwifery associations in Washington developed comprehensive guidance outlining conditions that a midwife may encounter in practice for which discussion, consultation, or transfer of care is indicated.

### WHO DECIDES WHEN A CLIENT SHOULD TRANSFER?

Like all health care providers, LMs have an ethical obligation to engage in a process of shared decision-making with their clients.

## Licensed Midwives in Washington State Provide Safe, Family Centered Care Within An Integrated Maternity Care System

### Learn More:

- [Birth Outcomes for Planned Home and Freestanding Birth Center Births in Washington State](#)
- [Medication Access and Midwifery Integration: An Example of Community Midwifery Advocacy for Access in Washington State, USA](#)
- [Are Perinatal Quality Collaboratives Collaboration Enough? How Including All Birth Settings Can Drive Needed Improvement in the United States Maternity Care System](#)
- [Mapping Integration of Midwives Across the United States: Impact on Access, Equity, and Outcomes](#)



Smooth Transitions™ is a Washington state-based quality improvement program enhancing the safety of hospital transfers.

### Mission:

To address our shared responsibility for improving hospital transfers from planned community-based births to promote greater patient safety and satisfaction.

### Goals:

- Improve the safety and efficiency of the transfer process through the establishment of system-wide protocols
- Collect and analyze transfer outcome data for the purpose of quality improvement
- Build greater collaboration between community-based midwives, EMS, and hospital care team
- Enhance the patient experience of care when transfers occur

GET THE LINKS FROM  
THIS HANDOUT:

[lnktr.co/smoothtransitions](https://lnktr.co/smoothtransitions)



© Smooth Transitions  
2022

ENDORSED BY:

MIDWIVES'  
ASSOCIATION

OF WASHINGTON STATE



FOUNDATION FOR  
Health Care Quality

# Postpartum & Newborn Care

- Complete newborn exam at birth
- Care for the newborn (up to 2 weeks)
- Home/clinic visits (24hr, 3-5d, 1-2wk), phone calls, and final postpartum visits at 6-8 weeks
- Newborn metabolic screening
- CCHD screening
- Newborn hearing screening
- Weight checks
- Jaundice assessment-labs prn
- RH negative protocol-RHIG
- Hepatitis B Vaccine
- Breastfeeding support
- Screening for postpartum mood disorders
- Referrals to newborn care providers and lactation specialists prn





# WA State Birth Data (2020)

Total births *	84,259	
Hospitals	80,581	95.6%
Freestanding Birth Centers	1,426	1.7%
Home Births	2,147	2.5%

**\* Includes federal facilities, born on arrival, other unknowns**

WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics,  
(9/27/21) personal communication, Justin Weisser,  
Epidemiologist, Washington State Department of Health (2020)

# Community Birth Outcomes

## MAWS Data in OB COAP 2015 - 2020

- 11,442 planned community births (at time of labor)
  - 85% of these births (n=9,737) occurred in their intended location (home or birth center)
  - Overall c-section rate was 5.3% (n=608)
    - Nulliparous c-section rate was 12.4% (n=507)
    - Multiparous c-section rate/no prior history of c-section was 1.0% (n=72)
    - Multiparous c-section rate/labor after prior c-section was 10.7% (n=29)
  - Spontaneous vaginal birth rate was 93.8% (n=10,733)
  - Physiologic birth rate was 84.1% (n=9,626)

# Community Birth Transfers

## Data in OB COAP 2015 - 2020

Intrapartum transfer rate	14.9% (1,705)
Nulliparous transfer rate	32.3% (1,326)
Multiparous transfer rate	5.2% (379)
C-section rate for transfers	35.7% (608)
Postpartum transfer rate (<6 hours after birth)	2.9% (284)
Postpartum hospital admissions rate (<6 hours – 30 days PP)	1.0% (117)
Neonatal transfer rate (<6 hours after birth)	2.1% (201)
Neonatal hospital admission rate(>6 hours – 30 days after birth)	2.3% (266)
Perinatal death rate (intrapartum + neonatal < 7 days)	0.87% (10)

# Smooth Transitions

## Program Components

- ❖ Initial hospital presentation
- ❖ **Co-creation of transfer protocols**
- ❖ **Perinatal Transfer Committee meetings**
- ❖ Qualitative data collection through 360-degree surveys -
- ❖ Creative problem-solving to improve quality of care and patient experience

# A closer look



## Perinatal Transfer Committee Meetings

- Meet regularly (~4x/year)
- Examine what's working/not working, any trends with transfers?
- Explore opportunities for interdisciplinary skills training and continuing education based on identified needs
- Develop additional QI opportunities

# Smooth Transitions

## Program Components

- ❖ Initial hospital presentation
- ❖ Co-creation of transfer protocols
- ❖ Perinatal Transfer Committee meetings
- ❖ Qualitative data collection through 360-degree surveys
- ❖ Creative problem-solving to improve quality of care and patient experience

- Surveys
  - Receiving Provider
  - Nursing
  - EMS
  - Community Midwife
  - Client



**Were you involved in a recent hospital transfer from a planned community birth?**

**Would you be willing to share your experience by completing one of the following surveys?**



Receiving Provider



EMS



Nursing Staff



Transferring Midwife



Client

**Thank you for helping to improve the quality and safety of these transfers in Washington state.**

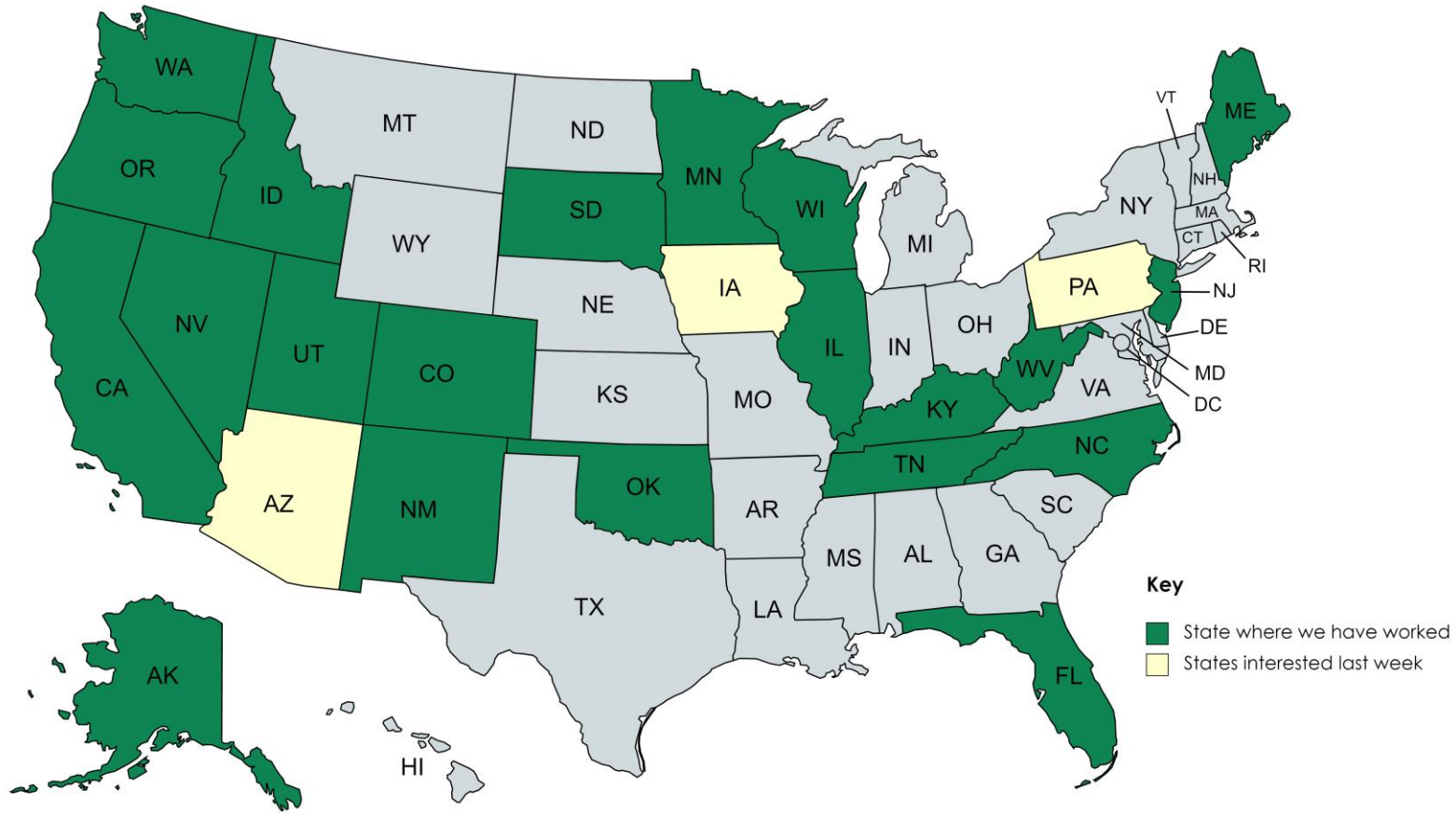
**Contact the Smooth Transitions Program Coordinator with any questions or concerns: [smoothtransitions@qualityhealth.org](mailto:smoothtransitions@qualityhealth.org)**

# On the Horizon



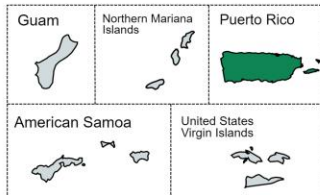
- **Experience-based Co-design**
- **Multidisciplinary Protected Case Review**
- **PRONTO International Collaboration: CPMs/EMS**
- **TeamBirth Partnership in Washington state**
- **Community Birth Data Registry (CBDR)**





**Key**

- State where we have worked
- States interested last week





# Thank You!

Melissa Denmark, MA, LM  
Smooth Transitions Program Coordinator  
[smoothtransitions@qualityhealth.org](mailto:smoothtransitions@qualityhealth.org)

Audrey Levine, LM, CPM-retired  
Co-Chair, Smooth Transitions Leadership Team  
[alevine@qualityhealth.org](mailto:alevine@qualityhealth.org)

Karen Hays, DNP, CNM, ARNP  
Smooth Transitions Leadership Team  
[swnkeh@comcast.net](mailto:swnkeh@comcast.net)



[qualityhealth.org/smoothtransitions](https://qualityhealth.org/smoothtransitions)