

*Toward Improving the Outcome of Pregnancy: Enhancing Perinatal Health Through Quality, Safety and Performance Initiatives (TIOP III)* is a call to action. It is a tool for anyone committed to the enhancement of perinatal health: clinicians on the frontline, as well as public health professionals, researchers, payers, policy-makers, patients and families. TIOP III is filled with examples of promising and successful initiatives at hospitals and health care systems across the country, designed to improve the quality of perinatal care.

**National Office**  
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10605  
(914) 428-7100  
[marchofdimes.com](http://marchofdimes.com)

# Toward Improving the Outcome of Pregnancy III

Enhancing Perinatal Health  
Through Quality,  
Safety and Performance Initiatives

Executive Summary,  
Cross-Cutting Themes  
and Action Items

December 2010

## TIOP III Cross-Cutting Themes and Action Items

### Assuring the uptake of robust perinatal quality improvement and safety initiatives

- Develop, disseminate and support validated perinatal quality and performance measures; collect standardized, comparable data; review practice and assure accountability.
- Encourage and incentivize use of The Joint Commission Perinatal Care Core Measure Set, as well as other National Quality Forum-endorsed perinatal measures.
- Define and disseminate evidence-based practices in perinatal care; implement standardized sets of evidence-based practices that, when performed collectively and reliably, have been shown to improve outcomes.
- Promulgate effective health center initiatives, as well as coalitions and multidisciplinary statewide collaboratives that maximize the impact of perinatal quality improvement initiatives.
- Promote timely feedback, increased public reporting and transparency of outcome measures in all perinatal quality improvement initiatives.
- Promote research to provide evidence for clinical practices, compare alternative practices and identify strategies to facilitate implementation of evidence-based practices.

### Creating equity and decreasing disparities in perinatal care and outcomes

- Promote equity and care across the spectrum of perinatal care that is culturally sensitive and developmentally and linguistically appropriate.
- Improve access to quality health care services, regardless of patient's ability to pay.

### Empowering women and families with information to enable the development of full partnerships between health care providers and patients and shared decision-making in perinatal care

- Educate, empower and support families to become more active in their care and in perinatal quality improvement efforts.

### Standardizing the regionalization of perinatal services

- Develop standard definitions and guidelines across the country for levels of maternal and infant care that are consistently utilized, to help optimize the effective regionalization of maternal and newborn care.

### Strengthening the national vital statistics system

- Create a highly reliable and valid collection of maternal and newborn vital statistics; maintain and promote electronic health records to enable measurement and improvements in perinatal care.
- Use electronic health records and an electronic infrastructure to enhance communication across integrated delivery systems or independent hospitals.

Ultimately, reaching a more efficient, more accountable system of perinatal care will require a level of collaboration, services integration and communication that lead to successful perinatal quality improvement initiatives, many of which are described throughout this book. In addition to the consistent collection of data and measurement and the application of evidence-based interventions, successful collaborations, like all perinatal quality

improvement, depend on the engagement, support and commitment of everyone reading this book: health care professionals and hospital leadership, public health professionals and community-based service providers, research scientists, policy-makers and payers, as well as patients and families. TIOP III is the call to action and the tool that can inspire and guide their efforts toward improving the outcome of pregnancy.

Each chapter explores the elements that are essential to improving quality, safety and performance across the continuum of perinatal care: consistent data collection and measurement; evidence-based initiatives; adherence to clinical practice guidelines; a life-course perspective; care that is patient- and family-centered, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate; policies that support high-quality perinatal care; and systems change.

As TIOP III demonstrates, improving the quality of perinatal care depends on applying evidence-based practice and clinical guidelines throughout the course of a woman's life. This means screening and monitoring for conditions that could compromise a healthy pregnancy long before a woman ever considers becoming pregnant; it means taking a comprehensive, culturally sensitive, linguistically and developmentally appropriate approach to a woman's preconception, prenatal, interconception and postpartum care, considering biological, emotional, as well as socioeconomic factors that could influence her health and her access to health care services.

Many of these evidence-based practices — CenteringPregnancy®, Kangaroo Care and exclusive breastmilk feeding — have been shown to improve perinatal health outcomes by empowering patients: positioning them, their newborns and their families at the center of their care and making them an integral part of their health care decision-making team.

Each chapter of TIOP III illustrates specific strategies and interventions that incorporate robust process and systems change, including the power of statewide quality improvement collaboratives that are improving perinatal outcomes. And it concludes with cross-cutting themes and action items that stakeholders across the continuum of perinatal care will recognize as opportunities to improve pregnancy outcomes.