

BIRTH CENTER COLLABORATIVE PILOT PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Birth center deliveries are a safe alternative for most women. When transfer to a hospital is needed, a timely transfer can improve outcomes for both mother and baby.

PURPOSE

This quality improvement project was started to identify best practices for collaboration between hospitals and birth centers/midwives to shorten transfer times and improve maternal and neonatal outcomes.

METHOD

Interprofessional training, provider pre- and post- surveys, and a new transfer process based on provider feedback were implemented to determine if a streamlined process and improved communication would improve outcomes.

RESULTS

Post-intervention provider to provider report doubled, there were no maternal or neonatal adverse outcomes, and staff satisfaction with the new pilot process showed as statistically significant improvement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

A standardized process for communication and transfer for patients from birth centers and midwifery care to hospitals that is streamlined, respectful, and patient centered can improve patient outcomes and provider satisfaction.

BACKGROUND

- Women have only a few choices of where they can deliver their children in the state of Texas: home, birth center, or hospital.
- The current social climate of real and/or perceived healthcare inequity, maternal morbidity and mortality, and fears of a lingering pandemic may lead women to choose birth outside the hospital setting for routine birth services (Behruzi et al., 2017; Profit et al., 2020; Whipps et al., 2021).
- Home delivery is a safe alternative for many low-risk women, but a delay in transport can often mean life or death for the mother, fetus, or newborn when a higher level of care is required.

PURPOSE

- The purpose of this quality improvement project was to:
 - ✓ Identify best practices in collaboration between birth centers/midwives and hospitals.
 - ✓ Improve communication and improve transport times of women and/or neonates requiring a higher level of care.
 - ✓ Decrease maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

METHODS/DESIGN

- Interprofessional training was offered to nurses, area midwives, and physicians to enhance team building skills and improve communication.
- A formal process for transport from birth center or home was established based on evidence and survey responses, with clear lines of communication to enhance provider to provider communication and encourage respect and a collaborative approach to care.
- Midwives who previously sent a patient to the pilot facility were contacted to discuss baseline data, the proposed pilot process, and desired outcome.
- Obstetric hospitalists were contacted by a physician champion and the project lead to discuss the pilot process and data.
- Labor and Delivery and Mother/Baby nurses attended a skills fair to receive project information.
- All participants were offered a webinar presentation of the project through a QR code.
- Chart audits were performed pre-intervention to review for adverse outcomes and patient data and audits were conducted throughout the intervention period. *Pre-Intervention dates 3/2017-9/2022 and post-intervention 10/2022-12/2023.*
- Providers were surveyed pre- and post-intervention for satisfaction with the transfer process and for recommendations for improvement.

RESULTS

- Report calls increased by 18%
- Timely patient transfers increased by 35%.
- Post-intervention there were no adverse maternal or neonatal outcomes
- Staff and provider survey results showed statistically significant increase in satisfaction and perception of communication related to the transfer process post-intervention ($p < .001$)

DELIVERY METHOD

- Pre-Intervention transfers resulted in 26% cesarean and 69% vaginal deliveries, with 5% undelivered (N=23).
- Post-Intervention transfers resulted in 37% cesarean and 63% vaginal deliveries as of December 2023 (N=16).

PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

- A standardized process for communication and transfer for patients from birth centers and midwifery care to hospitals can provide a streamlined, respectful, and patient centered approach that improves patient outcomes and provider satisfaction.

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