



Meeting of the Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Safety Task Force

June 24, 2025



MASSACHUSETTS
HEALTH POLICY COMMISSION



Agenda

WELCOME BY CO-CHAIRS

Approval of Minutes: April 2, 2025 (VOTE)

Maternal Health Task Force Report Outline and Scope of Work

- Role of Co-Chairs, Members, and Staff in Research and Report Drafting
- HPC Office of Health Resource Planning (OHRP) Report Outline
- Member Feedback on Report Outline

Upcoming Member Engagement

Agenda

Welcome by Co-Chairs



APPROVAL OF MINUTES: APRIL 2, 2025 (VOTE)

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VOTE

Approval of Minutes from April 2, 2025, MHTF Meeting

MOTION

That the Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Safety Task Force hereby approves the minutes of the Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Safety Task Force meeting held on **April 2, 2025**, as presented.

Task Force Members

Task Force Co-Chair David Seltz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Health Policy Commission

Task Force Co-Chair Cristina Alonso, DrPH, Director of Pregnancy, Infancy and Early Childhood, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Nashira Baril, MPH, Executive Director and Founder, Neighborhood Birth Center

Amy Gagnon, RN, Massachusetts Nurses Association

Godwin Osei-Poku, MD, DrPH, Associate Research Director, Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety

Christin Price, MD, Administrative Director, Perinatal Neonatal Quality Improvement Network of Massachusetts

Sara Shields, MD, Chair, Worcester Committee on Maternal and Perinatal Welfare, Massachusetts Medical Society

Leigh Simons, MPH, Senior Director, Healthcare Policy, Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association

Huong Trieu, PhD, Senior Director of Research, Center for Health Information and Analysis

Agenda

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MATERNAL HEALTH TASK FORCE REPORT OUTLINE AND SCOPE OF WORK

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Maternal Health Task Force Report Outline and Scope of Work

ROLE OF CO-CHAIRS, MEMBERS, AND STAFF IN RESEARCH AND REPORT DRAFTING

- HPC Office of Health Resource Planning (OHRP) Report Outline
- Member Feedback on Report Outline

Upcoming Member Engagement

The HPC's new Office of Health Resource Planning will lead the task force's analytic work and report drafting with member feedback.

- The HPC Office of Health Resource Planning (OHRP) will contribute to the **quantitative and qualitative work** of the Maternal Health Task Force.
- The **Department of Public Health** will support the task force's review of the maternal health care workforce in the Commonwealth.
- Members will be asked to **attend task force meetings**, meet with the co-chairs as needed to individually **review findings** and drafts, and **facilitate connections** to interviewees as needed.

HPC » Offices and Task Forces » Office of Health Resource Planning

Table of Contents

Overview

Resources and Related Work

Office of Health Resource Planning

Overview

The Office of Health Resource Planning (OHRP) was established with the goal of identifying and addressing service gaps and challenges in the Massachusetts health care system while fostering patient-centered care.



As the entity leading the first Massachusetts state health planning effort in over a decade, the OHRP applies rigorous data collection and analytic techniques to evaluate health care resource access and needs. OHRP investigates and reports on the factors that drive the misalignment of supply and need and makes policy recommendations to promote the appropriate supply and equitable distribution of services.

The OHRP is responsible for developing a **state health resource plan** to identify existing resources and the anticipated needs of the Commonwealth related to health care services, providers, programs, facilities, and workforce. Among the stated goals of the plan are maintaining and improving the quality of and access to health care services; ensuring a stable and adequate health care workforce; meeting the health care cost growth benchmark; supporting innovative health care delivery and alternative payment models; avoiding unnecessary duplication of health care resources; and advancing health equity and addressing health disparities.

Resources and Related Work

- Establishing Statute: **Chapter 343 of the Acts of 2024**

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HPC OFFICE OF HEALTH RESOURCE PLANNING (OHRP) REPORT OUTLINE

- Member Feedback on Report Outline

Upcoming Member Engagement

Task Force Legislative Mandate

Pursuant to **Chapter 186 of the Acts of 2024**, the Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Safety Task Force shall study:

- Past **essential services closures** for inpatient maternity units and acute-level birthing centers and closures of community-based, office-based, and preventative maternal health care;
- Patient **quality and safety** considerations of essential service closures of maternal care units; and
- **Demographic information** on patient populations whose access has been most affected by past closures of or current limitations on the availability of maternal care services.

The Task Force is charged with:

- Studying the **current availability of and access to maternal health services** and maternal health care across regions and patient populations, including the essential service closure process and adequacy of the maternal health care workforce;
- Identifying methods to increase the financial investment in and patient access to **maternal health care across Massachusetts** and ensuring equitable access for the most vulnerable birthing patient populations; and
- Issuing a report on the Task Force's **findings and policy recommendations**.

Proposed Report Outline

0 Introduction

1 Overview of Massachusetts Births and Birthing People

2 Massachusetts Maternity Care Supply and Capacity

3 Hospital Maternity Unit Closures: 2013-2024

4 Birth Center and Office-Based Care Closures

5 Policy Recommendations

Introduction

- Legislative charge and task force goals
- Acknowledgement and incorporation of work from other commissions and task forces
- Summary of past and ongoing work from the administration, legislature, health care market, community
- Approach to work



Chapter 1: Overview of Massachusetts Births and Birthing People

- Trends over time and geographic/demographic breakdowns of, e.g.:
 - Births and birth rates
 - Birth locations
 - Patient risk levels
 - Prenatal care adequacy
 - C-section and induction rates
 - Outcomes (e.g., preterm birth, low birthweight, SMM, mortality)
- Summary of existing data on patient birthing preferences



Chapter 2: Massachusetts Maternity Care Supply and Capacity



Facility Factors

- Geographic distribution of hospitals, NICUs, and maternity beds
- Staffed beds per births
- Hospital and system shares of OB discharges
- Maternity unit occupancy rates
- Drive time assessments
- Access factors beyond geographic proximity (e.g., quality, accessibility, affordability)



Workforce Factors

- Counts of OBs, CNMs, and other maternity providers, as available
- Maternity provider demographics, as available
- Literature and stakeholder conversations about workforce status, barriers to entry and retention, etc.



Factors that influence supply and capacity needs, e.g., patient risk level, access to primary care, health-related social needs.



Chapter 3: Hospital Maternity Unit Closures, 2013 – 2024



- Summary of maternity unit closures in Massachusetts
 - Total number of units and beds closed; location of closures
 - Common factors described in Essential Service Closure filings as justification for closure
- Case study of each maternity unit closure
 - **Hospital statistics:** CHIA hospital cohort, system affiliation, financial performance, payer mix, relative price, volume
 - **Maternity unit statistics:** size, volume/occupancy, geographic and demographic communities served, maternal quality measure performance, representativeness of community
 - **Circumstances of closure:** type of closure (e.g., whole-hospital or unit only), reasons for closure, date
 - **Impacts of closure:** e.g., drive times, low-risk C-section rates, induction rates, SMM, prenatal care adequacy
- Key themes observed across closure case studies
 - Patterns in hospital or maternity unit characteristics among hospitals that close
 - Patterns in how closures affect patient outcomes
 - Patterns in where patients go for maternity care after a hospital closure

Chapter 4: Birth Center and Office-Based Care Closures



Birth Center Closures

- Identification of closures, as sources allow
- Literature review and other qualitative insights on financial and regulatory barriers that birth centers face



Office-based Care Closures

- Identification of closures, as sources allow
- Changes in OB/GYN headcounts in outpatient settings over time



Chapter 5: Policy Recommendations



Possible areas for recommendations, depending on findings:

- Tracking hospitals at risk of closure; preventing closures of hospitals that are important based on drive times, quality, access, and affordability
- Regional planning to centralize care and prevent multiple closures in an area
- Mitigating harms of closures, including through transition planning
- Additional authorities needed related to closure
- Workforce supports
- Reimbursement/financial reforms
- Areas for further research

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 **MEMBER FEEDBACK ON REPORT OUTLINE**

Upcoming Member Engagement

Discussion Questions

- **Leveraging Task Force Member Knowledge:** Are there specific analyses, findings, or publications that should be integrated?
- **Hospital Closures:** Are there other categories of information that should be included in the hospital closure case studies?
- **Non-Hospital Closures:** Do task force members have data sources or other resources that could help us identify birth center closures and office-based closures?
- **Policy Recommendations:** Are there other topics on which task force members anticipate wanting to make recommendations?

Prioritizing Areas for Qualitative Research

Perspectives

- Patient
- Clinician
- C-Suite/Administrators
- Other area providers, EMS
- Community

Topics

- Factors that drive closures
- Impacts of closures on patients, surrounding providers, community
- Policy recommendations to prevent closures or mitigate harms

Approaches

- Deep dive on two to three closures, spanning multiple topics
- Single topic, spanning most or all closures

Discussion Questions

- Where can existing data, reports, or other secondary sources provide insights?
- Where can interviews or focus groups enhance our understanding of maternity supply, capacity, access, and closures?

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UPCOMING MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

The HPC maintains a webpage with all the information pertaining to the work of the Maternal Health Task Force.

[View membership details, upcoming meeting dates, and resources](#)



The screenshot shows the official website of the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC). The header includes the HPC logo and name, with navigation links for 'Meetings' and 'Publications'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'HPC » Offices and Task Forces » Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Saf...'. A left-hand navigation menu lists 'Table of Contents', 'Overview', 'Membership' (which is underlined), 'Maternal Health Task Force Meetings', 'Stay Connected', and 'Resources and Related Work'. The main content area features the title 'Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Safety Task Force' and an 'Overview' section. The overview text states that in August 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed Chapter 186 of the Acts of 2024, establishing a new nine-member task force on maternal health access and birthing patient safety, co-chaired by the HPC and the Department of Public Health. It also mentions the task force's charge to study and report on maternal health access, service availability, financial investment, and the impact of past service closures. A small icon of a person at a computer is visible next to the overview text. Below the overview is a 'Membership' section listing four members: Cristina Alonso, DrPH (Task Force Co-Chair), Alecia McGregor, PhD (Task Force Co-Chair), Nashira Baril, MPH (Executive Director and Founder, Neighborhood Birth Center), and Amy Gagnon, RN (Massachusetts Nurses Association).

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Meetings ▾ Publications ▾

HPC » Offices and Task Forces » Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Saf...

Table of Contents
Overview
Membership
Maternal Health Task Force Meetings
Stay Connected
Resources and Related Work

Maternal Health Access and Birthing Patient Safety Task Force

Overview

In August 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed **Chapter 186 of the Acts of 2024**. An Act promoting access to midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options. Section 48 establishes a new nine-member task force on maternal health access and birthing patient safety in the Commonwealth which is co-chaired by the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The task force is charged with studying and reporting on maternal health access and birthing patient safety across Massachusetts, including the current availability of maternal health services, financial investment in maternal health care, and the impact of past essential services closures.

Membership

- **Task Force Co-Chair Cristina Alonso, DrPH**, Director of Pregnancy, Infancy and Early Childhood, Bureau of Family Health and Nutrition, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH)
- **Task Force Co-Chair Alecia McGregor, PhD**, Faculty, Department of Health Policy and Management, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; Commissioner, Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC)
- **Nashira Baril, MPH**, Executive Director and Founder, Neighborhood Birth Center
- **Amy Gagnon, RN**, Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA)

The Resources section highlights recent work related to maternal health in Massachusetts that set the groundwork for the task force.

Resources and Related Work

- Severe Maternal Morbidity in Massachusetts, 2024
- MA Department of Public Health 2023 Review of Maternal Health Services, 2023
- MA DPH Data Brief: An Assessment of Severe Maternal Morbidity in Massachusetts: 2011-2020, 2023
- Final Report: Special Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health, 2022
- Other HPC publications related to maternal health

Upcoming Member Engagement



Individual Member Outreach

Co-chairs will engage members individually as needed to facilitate necessary connections to health systems, patients, and providers.



Task Force Meetings

Meetings will be scheduled throughout the research and drafting process to inform the progress of the report.

Contact Us



**Please direct follow-up
questions to:**



MA-MHTF@mass.gov



[MassHPC.gov/offices-and-task-forces/mhtf](https://masshpc.gov/offices-and-task-forces/mhtf)