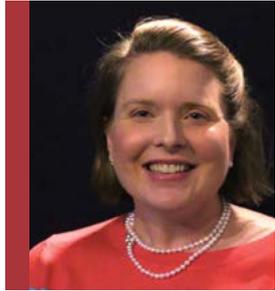


# QUALITY COUNTS...A QUALIDIGM COMPANY

By Amy Belisle, MD, MBA, Senior Medical Director



## Improving Maternal, Infant, and Child Health in Maine

Improving maternal, infant and child health in Maine is a critical issue that needs to be addressed on

an ongoing basis. Maternal-child health provides the foundation for a healthy start in life and ensures that kids are ready to learn in school. Quality Counts (QC), a Qualidigm Company, has worked tirelessly during the past nine years to identify, analyze, and implement ways to positively impact the health of Maine's youth. We are proud to report that our programs have already produced significant results; however, challenges remain, that require a response both at the practice and state level.

### Maine Child Health Improvement Partnership (MECHIP)

QC has a long-standing commitment to improving child health through partnerships and collaboration with public and private sectors. QC worked with MaineCare in support of the "Improving Health Outcomes for Children" (IHOC) program to establish MECHIP, which is part of the National Improvement Partnership Network (NIPN). MECHIP brings together partners to serve as an advisory group on QC child health initiatives, as well as developing strategic priorities for future child health work. QC has worked with partners to significantly improve the rates of childhood immunizations, developmental screening, autism screening, lead screening, and interventions on healthy weight and oral health.

### Perinatal Quality Collaborative for Maine (PQC4ME)

QC is working to develop a Perinatal Quality Collaborative for Maine (PQC4ME) with statewide partners to improve maternal and newborn health in Maine. The intent of the PQC4ME is to strengthen existing health systems to improve maternal, fetal, and neonatal outcomes through interprofessional educational programs and quality improvement projects. Currently the PQC4ME has two initial priority areas: improving care for moms with perinatal substance use and substance exposed infants, and evaluating infant mortality rates in Maine.

- **Snuggle ME:** In response to the opioid crisis and the concern that more than 7% of infants are born exposed to substances in the state, QC collaborated with the Maine CDC and the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to develop guidelines to standardize and coordinate care for women with substance use during pregnancy and their newborns. Currently, QC is working to provide education on the "Snuggle ME Guidelines" for the care of moms and substance exposed newborns across the state. The PQC4ME is also teaming up with statewide partnership, Northern New England Perinatal Quality Collaborative (NNEPQIN), to roll out *Eat, Sleep, and Console (ESC)*, an initiative to improve hospital care of substance exposed infants by strengthening maternal/family involvement and the use of nurturing as a first line of treatment. The program has demonstrated a reduction in the number of hospital days for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome through non-drug treatment while fostering optimal parental caregiving behaviors. Seventeen Maine hospitals were recently trained on the ESC approach and the PQC4ME is providing training, quarterly coaching calls, and technical assistance around quality improvement and data collection.
- **Maine Infant Mortality Research Project:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2016 Maine had a higher infant mortality rate than all other New England states. The PQC4ME recently started the Maine Infant Mortality Research Project, a one-year initiative designed to identify the drivers of infant mortality (IM) in Maine. The project is a fact-based assessment of the primary drivers of IM and will explore implementation strategies to reduce Maine's infant mortality rate (IMR). QC is currently working to develop an Advisory Group to oversee the project, identify and review data, and explore successful strategies to lower the IMR.

If you are interested in participating in this work, or learning more about other strategies to help improve child health in Maine, please contact: Amy Belisle, MD, MBA at [abelisle@mainequalitycounts.org](mailto:abelisle@mainequalitycounts.org).