

Summary

Wisconsin Maternal Health Innovation Strategic Plan

Maternal health outcomes in Wisconsin reflect a crisis rooted in structural inequities, not individual choices. Rates of severe maternal morbidity and preventable maternal deaths demand urgent action. These disparities stem from deeply entrenched systemic barriers, including unequal access to care, fragmented support systems, and health care structures that have not equitably served families across all geographic, economic, and demographic backgrounds. The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Public Health's Maternal Health Innovation (MHI) program developed this strategic plan to guide a coordinated, statewide response that is bold, innovative, and sustainable.

This plan was shaped by the voices and experiences of Wisconsin families, community-based organizations, public health professionals, Tribal and local health departments, clinicians, and researchers. Through listening sessions, collaborative planning, and analysis of lived experiences and statewide data, the MHI program and Maternal Health Task Force crafted a framework that honors what communities shared, what data revealed, and what is needed to drive meaningful change.

Link to full plan: dhs.wisconsin.gov/mch/maternal-health-innovation-program.htm



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of HEALTH SERVICES**

The MHI strategic plan is organized around three core themes that serve as the foundation for all action planning and implementation:

Community-centered care and support

Community-rooted supports like doulas, peer networks, and culturally responsive models play a central role in improving maternal health outcomes.

The MHI program has established three workgroups to explore this theme through distinct but interconnected lenses: 1) access to quality care, 2) trust and safety in health care settings, and 3) maternal mental health and substance use. MHI-funded projects and workgroups will elevate care approaches grounded in local knowledge and family needs.

Data-driven decision-making and transparency

A key priority of the MHI program is strengthening data collection, sharing, and application to drive informed decision-making. The plan commits to gathering data not only on outcomes, but also on how health care systems function.

By examining how structures and operations shape maternal health experiences and results, Wisconsin can uncover service gaps, promote consistent care, and support system-level improvements. This theme will guide the majority of work group activity in Years 1 and 2.

Sustainability through funding and resource allocation

Lasting improvements require long-term investments. This theme focuses on supporting sustainable funding strategies, workforce development, and the expansion of integrated care models, especially in communities experiencing the highest maternal morbidity and mortality rates. Work in Years 3 and 4 will prioritize efforts to scale and sustain effective practices.

The MHI strategic plan reflects a statewide commitment to transforming the maternal health system so that maternal health care is safe, respectful, and effective. Through continued community engagement, transparent data usage and sharing, and coordinated leadership, the MHI program lays the groundwork for meaningful progress that transforms systems, supports community-led solutions, establishes trusted care models, and creates structural changes prioritizing long-term improvement.