



Project Overview

Year after year, overdose has remained a leading cause of maternal mortality in Colorado and across the United States, which suffers from the highest maternal mortality rate of any industrialized nation in the world.

Join the **Colorado MOMs (Maternal Overdose Matters) Initiative** to help save the lives of moms and babies in your community!

Our Goal

Our goal is for 100% of hospital-based obstetric, labor and delivery, perinatal, and neonatal units to provide overdose education and naloxone distribution to at-risk pregnant and postpartum patients and families.

Our Core Values

Ingenuity

Colorado has been a leader in naloxone distribution through its early adoption of naloxone standing orders, Good Samaritan laws, and the use of naloxone by law enforcement. The Colorado Naloxone Project, launched in 2021, also succeeded in recruiting over 100 hospitals in the state to implement take-home naloxone programs from their emergency departments. The **Colorado MOMs Initiative** is committed to making Colorado the first state in the nation in which every hospital-based obstetric, labor and delivery, perinatal, and neonatal unit consistently identifies pregnant and postpartum patients at risk of opioid overdose and sends them home with naloxone in hand.

Compassion

Pregnant and postpartum patients struggling with opioid use disorder (OUD) deserve understanding, compassion, and evidence-based medical treatment. Naloxone plays a key role in treating patients with OUD, and the distribution of the antidote to at-risk patients and families sends a powerful message that the lives of those parents struggling with substance abuse, and the lives of their unborn or new baby, matter.



Evidence-Based Practice

Naloxone saves lives; the safety and efficacy of the drug is definitive. How the medication can be most effectively distributed is a question that public health officials are trying to answer. Our belief is that hospital-based obstetric, labor and delivery, perinatal, and neonatal units, where pregnant and postpartum patients with OUD are often seen, are key players in naloxone distribution. We can build a better system, where medical institutions take the lead.

Accountability

The **Colorado MOMs Initiative** will track and publicize which hospitals are distributing naloxone to at-risk pregnant and postpartum patients and families. This will help drive change through visibility, publicity, and accountability. We will continue to encourage our community and hospital partners to distribute naloxone until every Colorado hospital is in compliance.

Project Background

In recent years, fentanyl has driven overdose numbers to startling new highs. In 2021, an estimated 1,881 Coloradans died of an overdose – a 75% increase since 2019. Overdose and suicide remain the number one and two causes of nonpregnancy-related maternal death in Colorado year after year. Compounding the problem, opioid misuse has created significant strain on children's health and the child welfare system. Since 2017, the number of children entering foster care due to parental drug use has increased by 147%. Simply put, the opioid overdose crisis is destroying American families. More must and can be done.

The worsening of the opioid crisis comes at a time when severe cuts to government-funded programs have further limited access to care for pregnant and postpartum patients with OUD. In addition, the heavy burden that the COVID-19 epidemic has placed on health care workers and systems has had devastating effects. Despite these obstacles, there are glimmers of hope. New changes in the state's laws pave the way for a dramatic increase in naloxone distribution through hospital-based obstetric units.

Naloxone plays a vital role in decreasing overdose deaths. Furthermore, research shows that patients who receive a prescription for naloxone are more likely to enter a treatment program, report decreased drug use, and demonstrate a greater willingness to undergo screening for HIV and hepatitis. Patients who receive naloxone are also more likely to educate their friends and family members on overdose recognition and response.

Thanks to four converging factors, Colorado has an opportunity to radically change how naloxone is distributed to those pregnant and postpartum patients at risk of overdose. The **Colorado MOMs Initiative** aims to use these building blocks to rapidly and effectively ensure that every hospital that delivers babies in Colorado has a take-home naloxone program.



1. Colorado House Bill 20-1065. Passed in 2020, the Harm Reduction Bill removes one of the largest barriers to take-home naloxone programs by giving hospitals the ability to bill for the naloxone they dispense. The law stipulates: "A carrier that provides coverage for opiate antagonists pursuant to the terms of a health coverage plan the carriers shall reimburse a hospital for the hospital's cost of an opiate antagonist if the hospital gives a covered person an opiate antagonist upon discharge from the hospital." This stipulation applies to private insurers.
2. [Colorado 2019 Overdose Education and Naloxone Distribution Guidelines](#). Colorado is the first state to publish guidelines recommending the distribution of naloxone from every hospital. These guidelines have the support of the Colorado Hospital Association, Colorado Medical Society, and Colorado Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention
3. [Colorado MOMs Initiative Toolkit](#) that contains instructional videos, patient education materials, and toolkits designed to help hospitals and bedside clinicians create and sustain obstetric unit take-home naloxone programs.
4. Colorado House Bill 22-1326. Passed in 2022, the Fentanyl Accountability and Prevention Bill removes the remaining barriers for hospitals to implement take-home naloxone programs. By eliminating any labeling and tracking requirements when dispensing take-home naloxone, and mandating that Medicaid also reimburse a hospital for the hospital's cost of dispensing naloxone, take-home naloxone programs are now fully sustainable.

Project Leadership

The **Colorado MOMs Initiative** is a collaborative effort between multiple organizations. Implementation, technical expertise, and leadership is provided by the Colorado chapter of The Naloxone Project, a 501(c)3 organization. Co-chairing the project are Dr. Kaylin Klie, MD, MA and Rachael Duncan, PharmD. As the **Colorado MOMs Initiative** continues to evolve, we hope that you and your organization will strongly consider a leading role in our efforts.



Project Timeline & Strategic Plan

A Strong Foundation | August 2022 – September 2023

The **Colorado MOMs Initiative** was publicly announced on Overdose Awareness Day August 31, 2022. Partner organizations that can advance our goal of 100% of hospital-based labor and delivery units distributing naloxone are being actively recruited. These include nonprofits, trade associations, harm reduction organizations, physician organizations, health care organizations, recovery advocacy/patient groups, and others. From these stakeholders, a Leadership Council for the project is being created and will help oversee the work and further development of the **Colorado MOMs Initiative**. The first Leadership Council meeting will convene on October 31, 2022.

First Steps | October 2022 – December 2022

Working with stakeholders, we will identify barriers to implementation and work to secure initial hospital pledges to participate in the **Colorado MOMs Initiative**. We will create a public-facing website and **Colorado MOMs Initiative** toolkits for hospitals and obstetric units to ease implementation. We will also continue fundraising efforts.

Project Launch | January 2023 - June 2023

We will hold public-facing events with a press release and media push to advertise the project and its goals. We will create partnerships with television, radio, and written media to promote the project and give publicity to the hospitals that are enrolled in the **Colorado MOMs Initiative** and distributing naloxone.

Continued Recruitment and Implementation | June 2023 - August 2023

After the initial launch we will continue to systematically recruit hospitals across the state. We will provide troubleshooting and implementation guidance to hospitals that are launching their obstetric unit take-home naloxone programs. We will continue to work with stakeholders on how to improve distribution of naloxone and advertising of programs. On a monthly basis we will update the **Colorado MOMs Initiative** website with participating hospitals and release monthly reports and press releases of hospitals that have joined. Bi-monthly meetings will be held with the Leadership Council to update on progress and continue shaping the vision of the project. The year 1 annual report will be published on Overdose Awareness Day 2023 August 31.



Measuring Success: Growth Outside of Colorado | September 2023 - January 2024

In fall 2023 we will publish data on the success of the **Colorado MOMs Initiative**, including metrics of how many hospitals have enrolled in the project and how much naloxone has been distributed in the first six months of the project. We will hold public-facing events with a press release and media push reporting the success of the project. Based on the success of the program, we will consider expansion of the **Colorado MOMs Initiative** into other practice environments (such as outpatient obstetric and primary care practices) and to other states.

Our Request

Become part of the **Colorado MOMs Initiative**. Individuals, organizations, hospitals, and nonprofit organizations are all invited to join our team. Sign up for our newsletter and become an active member of our community of hospital-based harm reductionists.

Consider sponsorship. The **Colorado MOMs Initiative** depends on the generosity of like-minded individuals with a desire to end maternal overdose deaths in Colorado and across the nation. Support our mission by helping make take-home naloxone programs a reality in every obstetrical unit!