



CHAMPLAIN MATERNAL NEWBORN REGIONAL PROGRAM
PROGRAMME RÉGIONAL DES SOINS À LA MÈRE
ET AU NOUVEAU-NÉ DE CHAMPLAIN

CMNRP Rapid Response Postnatal Care Taskforce Executive Summary



April 19, 2021

Situation

A novel coronavirus was identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, China which was quickly recognized as an emerging health crisis. The first case of COVID-19 in Canada was identified in January 2020. A global COVID-19 pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020. Following this, a lockdown was implemented in Ontario where non-essential businesses and schools were closed, and health care services were prioritized to only those that were necessary. Essential in-person services continued, a rapid shift to virtual care occurred for some services, and some services were altogether on hold.

Background

Early in the first wave of the pandemic, it was identified that the needs of postnatal families in our region were not being met. We heard from care providers and members of the CMNRP Family Advisory Committee that some families were not able to get the required follow-up care and support after birth.

We formed a rapid response taskforce in June 2020 which was co-lead by Dr. Daisy Moores, Family Physician, Head of the Division of Maternal and Newborn Care, The Ottawa Hospital, and Christina Cantin, Perinatal Consultant, CMNRP. There were a total of 18 members representing diverse professions and sectors, as well as one parent experience advisor.

Assessment

The taskforce completed three main activities to gather further information on the needs of healthcare providers and families which included: creating a health care provider survey, soliciting/ collecting examples of innovative responses to support the needs of postnatal families, and developing a parent survey.

The conceptual framework guiding this work was the *Model for Evidence-Informed Decision Making in Public Health*¹. This model includes 4 factors to consider that can impact decision making.



Health Care Provider Survey

A data collection survey form was based on the 10 standards of postnatal care identified by the Provincial Council for Maternal & Child Health² and the 5 outcome indicators from the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada³. The data collection form was disseminated via email to partners and colleagues in the region in August 2020. It was requested that respondents complete the form collectively with their interprofessional colleagues to ensure comprehensive perspectives were obtained from their respective agency/organization.



42 data collection forms were received from colleagues working in the community (n=16 including community health centres, family resource centres, breastfeeding support groups), hospital (n=10, from all levels of care), primary care (n=8 including nurse practitioner-led clinics, family health teams, private clinics/practices), public health (n=5), and midwifery groups (n=3).

The top three priority concerns identified were breastfeeding; mental health; and newborn follow-up. A word cloud was created to illustrate the common responses.

Breastfeeding

“During COVID we have seen an increase in early discharges. Our concern with this is that patients may not be receiving sufficient postpartum teaching and breastfeeding support”. (Hospital respondent)

“Parents are hesitant to have home visits at this time. Prior to COVID-19 this was one of the main ways the Early Years RN supported breastfeeding parents especially in their infants first 2 months of life when getting out of the house can be very challenging”. (Community respondent)

“Some families are still not comfortable bringing their babies out to clinic. Our organization has not set up virtual appointments at this time”. (Public Health respondent)

Newborn Follow-up

“Follow up appts were generally booked 1 week after hospital discharge however the current request is that healthy thriving babies be seen in 24-72 hour for regular f/u. This is not always a manageable time frame. Urgent appts are accommodated.” (Family Health Team respondent)

“Babies not always able to be seen at their MD’s offices due to scheduling, telephone access etc. Since COVID this has been very limited including MD’s doing appts by telephone” (Primary care respondent)

“Anecdotally, some clients are not getting this early appointment for f/u – many are not seeing their primary care providers until 2 weeks postpartum.” (Public health respondent)

Mental Health

Given the challenging times that COVID has created we need to put more attention towards our teaching on maternal mental health and the available resources in the community. (Hospital respondent)

With no in person programming available at this time, parents do not have the same opportunities to create support networks with others. They have fewer opportunities to share their experiences or chance to learn from one another. (Community respondent)

Virtual programming is not the same as in-person contact. It is much more challenging to build a trusting relationship with clients so that they feel comfortable enough to open up about challenges they are facing. (Community respondent)

One doctor was offering PP Depression Group sessions. There is a need for more of this and I believe offering these groups prenatally would be key. Working on self-confidence, self-care, relaxation methods all building up to building attachment with their unborn child would be better than simply offering support postnatally. (Public health respondent)

Increase knowledge of mental health for new mothers and how to manage ideal expectations in this new period. (Hospital respondent)

Innovative Approaches to Postnatal Care in the Pandemic

Five webinars were hosted by CMNRP to discuss the top three priority concerns. The purpose was to share information related to providing postnatal care and support during the pandemic. There were a total of 24 panelists for the five webinars and a total of 420 people registered for the webinars. Recordings were uploaded to the @CMNRP_LHINS YouTube channel and to date there have been a combined total of over 400 views. See Appendix for details.

Family Survey

At this time, CMNRP is looking for a partner to collaborate in the finalization and dissemination of the survey.

Recommendations

- Continue to share key messages with families and health care providers related to the importance of accessing early postnatal follow-up according to guidelines.
- Facilitate sub-region communication to identify local pathways for existing and novel supports.
- Advocate for the maintenance or resumption of targeted supports for families identified with-risk (e.g. programming through the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, community health centres, and EarlyON centres which can provide longer term support to enhance parenting confidence).
- Provide anticipatory guidance to families related to mental health and infant safety.

Acknowledgements

We thank all the taskforce membership for their contributions to this work and to their organizations who supported the participation. See Appendix B for list of members. A special thanks to Amanda DeGrace, a parent experience advisor, who liaised with the Family Advisory Committee to obtain family input in all aspects of this work.

This report was prepared by Christina Cantin, Perinatal Consultant on behalf of the postnatal rapid response taskforce.

References

- 1- National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools (n.d). *Evidence-Informed Decision Making. A Model for Evidence-Informed Decision Making in Public Health*. <https://www.nccmt.ca/tools/eiph>
- 2- Provincial Council for Maternal & Child Health (2018). Standards of postnatal care for mothers and newborns in Ontario: Birth to one-week postnatal period. Toronto, ON: Author. <https://www.pcmch.on.ca/health-care-providers/maternity-care/pcmch-strategies-and-initiatives/standards-postnatal-care/>
- 3- Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (2017). The BFI 10 Steps and WHO Code Outcome Indicators for Hospitals and Community Health Services. <https://breastfeedingcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Indicators-we2019-En.pdf>

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Appendix. A Summary of webinars

Breastfeeding October 14, 2020

Sonya Boersma, MscN, RN, IBCLC, Lactation Consultant, Lactation Care

Sue Thériault Valin, BSc, IBCLC, Lactation Consultant, Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre

Gillian Szollos, BA, Health Promoter, Carlington Community Health Centre

Cindy Kaye, BScN, RN, IBCLC, Lactation Consultant, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre

Erin Shaheen, R.S.S.W, Childbirth Educator / Doula, Ottawa Childbirth Education Association

Jos Anderson (Family Physician with focused practice in Breastfeeding Medicine Monarch Centre; The Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus)

Mental Health Webinar #1 November 18, 2020

Amanda DeGrace, CMNRP Family Advisory Committee, Postnatal Taskforce Member

Nancy McLaren Kennedy, Peer Specialist/Mental Health Worker, Women's Mental Health, The Royal Ottawa Health Care Group

Courtney Holmes, Family Outreach and Birth Companion Support worker for the Birth Companion Program, Birth/Postpartum Doula and Prenatal Educator, Mothercraft

Susan Martensen, Certified Postpartum Doula, Past President DONA International, Facilitator of Mothercraft Ottawa's Postpartum Support-Drop-in

Greg Lubimiv, BSW, MSW, RSW, CAPT-S Executive Director of the Phoenix Centre for Children and Families

Mental Health Webinar #2 November 25, 2020

Charlotte Maloney, Chair CMNRP Family Advisory Committee

Gillian Szollos, BA, Family Support Community Worker/Health Promoter, Carlington Community Health Centre, Ottawa

Stéphanie C. Boyer, Ph.D., C.Psych., Psychologist, The Psychology Clinic at Queen's Director, Perinatal Mental Health Service; Department of Psychology, Queen's University

Dr. Jasmine Gandhi, MD, Program Leader, Perinatal Mental Health, The Ottawa Hospital-General Campus; Faculty of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, Assistant Professor, UOttawa

Well-baby Webinar #1 February 10, 2021

Jodi Ouellette, RN, BScN, Perinatal Nurse in Primary Care and Early Years Programs at Centretown Community Health Centre, Ottawa

Jennifer Faulkner, RN, BScN, Professional Practice Specialist, Maternal Child Program, Quinte Health Care

Sarah Murtha, RM, Quinte Midwives

Louise Gilbert, RN, IBCLC, PNC(C), MScN, Manager, Healthy Growth & Development, Ottawa Public Health

Well-baby Webinar #2 February 17, 2021

Dr. David Millar, Physician, Executive Director and Medical Lead - Monarch Centre; Family Med - Low Risk OB - Active Staff Member - The Ottawa Hospital- Civic Campus; Assistant Professor - Faculty of Medicine - University of Ottawa

Tara Parsons, RN IBCLC, Monarch Maternal and Newborn Health

Dr. Daisy Moores, Head, Division of Maternal and Newborn Care, The Ottawa Hospital

Claudia Smith, Manager, The Ottawa Hospital

Dr. Michelle Ward, MD, Medical Director For Child and Youth Protection, CHEO

Appendix B. Postnatal Care Rapid Response Taskforce Members

Members	Organization/Role
Dr. Daisy Moores co-lead	Family Physician, Head, Division of Maternal and Newborn Care, The Ottawa Hospital
Christina Cantin co-lead	Perinatal Consultant, CMNRP
Amanda DeGrace	Parent Experience Advisor, CMNRP Family Advisory Committee
Brittany Martin	Community Health Nurse, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan
Colleen Musclow	Temporary Manager, Healthy Families, Renfrew County and District Health Unit
Diane Lalonde	Program Manager, HBHC and Family Health, Eastern Ontario Health Unit
Elaine Jeffries	Clinical Resource Nurse Specialist Maternal Newborn Care, Weeneebayko Area Health Authority
Erin Shaheen	Childbirth Educator / Doula, Ottawa Childbirth Education Association
Jenna Aubry	Registered Nurse / Clinical Care Leader Mother-Baby Unit, The Ottawa Hospital-General Campus
Jennifer Theriault	Early Years Coordinator/Health Promoter, Centretown Community Health Centre
Jenny Vandemeer	Public Health Nurse, Leeds Grenville and Lanark Health Unit
Keri-Ann Berga	Perinatal Consultant, CMNRP
Louise Gilbert	Clinical Nurse Specialist, Healthy Growth and Development, Ottawa Public Health
Marilyn Crabtree	Family Physician / Family Health Organization Lead, Winchester District Memorial Hospital
Rachael Jaffray	Registered Nurse, Childbirth Centre, Queensway-Carleton Hospital
Robyn Berman	Registered Midwife, The Ottawa Hospital/Midwifery Collective of Ottawa
Sonya Boersma	Private Practice Lactation Consultant, Lactation Care
Stephanie Simchison	Registered Nurse, Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health

Ad Hoc Members	Organization/Role
Anna Dion	Birth Companion; PhD Student, Family Medicine, McGill University
Darlene Rose	Regional Director, Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program