

# Maternal Mental Health Coalition

Flathead County, MT

## Background

The Maternal Mental Health Coalition (MMHC) falls under governance of the Best Beginning Community Council- an inclusive effort to bring all community-based organizations that serve children and families together.

Flathead County has had various efforts over the years to support perinatal mood disorders, with mental health continually identified as a top priority in the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). The MMHC was created as a response to the increased need for mental health services for new mothers and fathers during the perinatal period. The coalition's primary goal is to increase the number of women screened for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and connect them with available resources.

The MMHC intends to develop a system for routine screening practice for perinatal mood disorders to be adopted by local providers and community partners. It also intends to develop a system to offer support during routine contacts with perinatal women and a system for making referrals for additional professional and peer support and services.

## Network Partners in the Integrator Learning Lab

- Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana\*
- Flathead Best Beginnings Community Council
- Flathead City-County Health Department\*
- Flathead Community Health Center
- Kalispell Regional Healthcare
- North Valley Hospital
- Postpartum Resource Group
- The Nurturing Center
- Zero to Five Initiative

\*Network representatives in the 2020 Integrator Learning Lab



### For more information:

Website:

<http://www.flatheadforward.com/groups/flathead-maternal-mental-health-coalition/>

Email: [emilylucas406@gmail.com](mailto:emilylucas406@gmail.com) - Emily Lucas

### Near-Term, Lab-Related Goals

- Refine the vision and mission of the MMHC - inclusive of building in an action orientation and clarifying the Coalition's value for current/potential stakeholder groups
- Transition interim leadership to an intentional, longer-term governance structure
- Establish and test a shared leadership structure where one of the co-leads is a representative of the community/group served by the Coalition
- Create expectations around consistent meetings, regular attendance from key stakeholders, and active participation of members
- Map the network, and its place among other groups/networks in the community. This includes determining how it will work with other community partners and where this group fits into the larger conversation of the other mental health and substance abuse work happening in the community

The 2020 Integrator Learning Lab was made possible through the support of The Kresge Foundation. To learn more about the Learning Lab, please email [MHCU@Nemours.org](mailto:MHCU@Nemours.org) or visit the project web pages at [www.movinghealthcareupstream.org/2020-integrator-learning-lab/](http://www.movinghealthcareupstream.org/2020-integrator-learning-lab/)

### Achievements Supported by Technical Assistance from the Learning Lab

- Created MMHC network learning map (technical assistance tool) to capture coalition history and connect newcomers to those who started this work
- Drafted a value proposition document for use with internal and prospective MMHC stakeholders
- Established coalition-wide consensus on a key short-term goal for MMHC (6 providers in 6 months)
- Clarified governance structure and decision-making authority of MMHC, as a subsidiary of a larger coalition
- Identified and engaged new, local leadership for MMHC, and completed a leadership transition process including identification of duties of new leaders using tools such as public narrative
- Completed a network mapping process in the spirit of identifying most relevant stakeholders over all stakeholders
- Clarified MMHC's role relative to other regional stakeholders as focusing specifically on providers and reduced financial needs

### Integrative Areas of Future Focus

Though the 2020 Integrator Learning Lab has drawn to a close, the Maternal Mental Health Coalition will continue to be deliberate and strategic about deploying integrative activities in support of the goals of the network. This will include a focus on health equity and community engagement, with actions such as:

- Sustaining and strengthening the convener function to ensure that MMHC maintains momentum as it transitions to new leadership
- Allowing flexibility among leaders going forward- rotating which leader is in charge of which meeting -- will require sharing among leads to prevent burn out
- Facilitating decision-making around future roles of the Coalition (e.g. will it take on responsibility for creating and/or funding the resource guide), taking related fundraising and sustainability needs into consideration
- Playing a leadership role in the distribution of the resource guide and promoting its use among Coalition partners and the community at-large