FACTS ABOUT OBSTETRIC & NEONATAL CARE SERVICES

The Importance of Hospital Obstetric and Neonatal Intensive Care Funding

The challenges that affect obstetric services in the commonwealth demonstrate a growing trend of diminished access to care for pregnant women.

- The mounting pressure on access to obstetric services in many areas in Pennsylvania is due in part to the closing of 47 hospital obstetric units (since 2000) and many neonatal intensive care units. In greater Philadelphia alone, more than a dozen obstetric units have closed since 2000.¹

- Each year, more than 135,000 babies are born in Pennsylvania hospitals. Medical Assistance (MA) funds nearly half of all births.²

- The state’s birth rate has decreased moderately during recent years, but the percentage of low birth weight babies—less than 2,500 grams (5 pounds, 8 ounces)—who need more specialized care, has not decreased.

- During 2015, more than 2,600 newborns were hospitalized in Pennsylvania for substance-related problems, including opioid addiction.⁴

- The infant mortality rate in Pennsylvania is greater than the national average. Although Pennsylvania’s infant mortality rate has been decreasing in recent years, the state’s rate continues to be above the U.S. rate.

Pennsylvania Hospitals and Obstetric Units

Status

- OB & Hospital open
- OB closed, Hospital closed
- OB closed, Hospital open
Ensuring access to appropriate prenatal, obstetrics, and post–partum services is an essential investment in Pennsylvania’s future.

| Infant Mortality Rate (infant deaths per 1,000 live births)³ |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| PA                   | 7.3   | 7.1   | 7.2   | 7.6   | 7.5   | 7.3   | 7.2   | 7.5   | 7.3   | 6.7   | 5.9   | 6.1   |
| US                   | 6.9   | 6.8   | 6.7   | 6.7   | 6.8   | 6.5   | 6.8   | 6.7   | 6.5   | 6.0   | 5.9   | 5.9   |

Challenges:

- Lack of timely access (prenatal, obstetric, and post-partum) for certain populations
- The 250 percent increase (2000 to 2015) in babies born addicted to opioids and other substance-related drugs⁴
- A growing reliance by hospitals with obstetrics services on MA to fund prenatal, obstetric, and postnatal care
- Inadequate reimbursement for unfunded mandates, including increased newborn testing, screening, and reporting
- Continuing impact of medical liability coverage crisis and its impact on the supply of obstetricians, family practitioners, midwives, other allied health professionals. Obstetrics is an area that has been impacted significantly by the liability crisis.

Sources:

1 Pennsylvania Department of Health, licensed facilities as of June 30, 2015, Annual Utilization Report 14
2 HAP analysis of Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council data
3 National Center for Health Statistics
4 Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council data