



Nurture NC's Collective Impact to Improve Maternal and Infant Health in North Carolina

The Problem: A Crisis in Maternal and Infant Health

North Carolina is facing a critical public health crisis regarding maternal and infant well-being:

- **Preventable Deaths:** The state's maternal mortality rate is 78% higher than the national goal and continues to worsen.
- **Poor Outcomes:** The March of Dimes 2025 Report Card assigned North Carolina a D+ grade for preterm birth prevention, ranking it among the worst states for pregnant women and infants.
- **Coordination Gap:** Despite significant work by numerous partners, efforts across NC are fragmented, lacking the statewide coordination and alignment needed for a collective impact solution.

The Solution: Nurture NC—A Collective Impact Backbone

Building on the excellent work being done by partners across the state and modeled on successful collective impact initiatives in Arkansas and New Jersey, Nurture NC will function as the backbone organization to strategically improve maternal and infant health across North Carolina. Our work is organized around three core, state-wide focus areas: **Rural Healthcare Access, Public Policy Optimization, and Maternal Health Workforce.**

Nurture NC will achieve impact by:

- **Coordinating Effort:** Amplifying, connecting, and aligning existing initiatives and funding streams.
- **Filling Gaps:** Identifying opportunities, partners, and community-based solutions where current efforts are lacking.
- **Driving Change:** Catalyzing Action in the Identified Focus Areas and supporting non-partisan strategic policy changes.

The Initial Priorities

Maternal Health Workforce -Address the critical shortage of high-quality providers to improve maternal outcomes in all communities across North Carolina.

Priority 1: Increase the number of midwives across North Carolina

Priority 2: Increase access to doula services in all NC counties

Focus Area: Rural HealthCare Access - Reduce geographic disparities in maternal health outcomes by expanding access to high-quality care and support services in rural communities

Priority 1: Increase access to early and longitudinal routine prenatal care in rural communities across North Carolina

Priority 2: Using available data sources, identify the top 5% of NC counties with cross-sectional indicators that contribute to poor maternal-child outcomes and mobilize philanthropically supported community action coalitions

Priority 3: Seek to understand models for innovative perinatal services to identify opportunities for expansion across NC

Focus Area: Public Policy Optimization - Drive smarter public policy investments to sustain improvements in maternal and infant health statewide.

Priority 1: In partnership with NC Medicaid managed care plans, increase utilization of Value Added Benefits across all plans and in all Medicaid regions for perinatal and infant-specific benefits

Priority 2: Decrease the incidence of congenital syphilis mortality and morbidity across North Carolina

Priority 3: Endorse and support the deployment of Levels of Maternal Care in North Carolina

Priority 4: Protect existing access to the full array of Medicaid-covered benefits in the pregnancy and postpartum period

Priority 5: Expand access to telehealth behavioral health and substance use services for pregnant women in rural communities by reducing technology barriers

Priority 6: Advance initiatives that promote economic support for mothers and infants