



August 4, 2023

Dear Colleague:

The death of a woman during pregnancy, at delivery, or soon after delivery is a tragedy. The Georgia Maternal Mortality Review Committee was established to review cases of maternal mortality in Georgia, and to make recommendations for interventions to prevent future deaths. The Committee has identified cardiomyopathy and cardiac and coronary conditions as the leading causes of pregnancy-related deaths that occurred during 2018-2020 in Georgia. The Committee further determined that all (26) of the deaths that occurred because of these cardiac related causes were preventable.

To prevent future pregnancy-related deaths from cardiomyopathy and cardiac and coronary conditions, the Committee has recommended that all care environments should implement the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) Cardiac Conditions in Obstetrical Care patient safety bundle.

AIM is a national, data-driven maternal safety and quality improvement initiative which is based on proven safety and quality improvement strategies to improve maternal outcomes and save lives. AIM provides support to state perinatal quality improvement collaboratives for the adoption of patient safety bundles, including the cardiac bundle.

The Georgia Perinatal Quality Collaborative (GaPQC) that is led by DPH includes maternal care providers from across the state who work together to implement perinatal quality improvement initiatives in birthing facilities. The collaborative recently launched the AIM Cardiac Conditions in Obstetric Care (CCOC) bundle in twelve birthing facilities, making Georgia the first state in the country to implement this important safety bundle. The cardiac bundle, unlike previous AIM bundles that have been implemented by GaPQC, requires partnership and collaboration beyond maternal care providers and systems. Successful implementation depends on the involvement of cardiologists to help establish a system of coordinated consultation, patient navigation, co-management of care, and transfer to higher levels of care when indicated.

An important component of the cardiac bundles is the creation of a statewide referral network for pregnant and post-partum women with or at risk for cardiac conditions. We need cardiologists that provide care to women during pregnancy and postpartum to add their practice information to the Georgia Cardiologist Referral Network, the statewide obstetric/cardiology referral system. The purpose of the Network is to establish a referral resource for maternal care providers to increase timely consultations and referrals for pregnant and post-partum patients with or at risk for cardiac conditions. Cardiology practice information

can be entered into a survey found at the following link: [GaPQC Assessment of Cardiac Consultation and Referral Network](#).

As commissioner and as a physician, I urge cardiologists to join in the implementation of the AIM Cardiac Conditions in Obstetrical Care patient safety bundle by being part of the Cardiac Consultation and Referral Network. With your help, we can establish a system to ensure maternal patients with or at risk for cardiac conditions receive needed referrals and interventions to prevent maternal morbidity and mortality.

Thank you for all you do to protect the health and lives of Georgians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kathleen E. Toomey".

Kathleen E. Toomey. M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner and State Health Officer