
MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

The health of mothers, infants, and families is preventive health at its most powerful; setting a strong foundation of health early in life sets the stage for a lifetime of good health and overall population health. Not all women seek pregnancy and motherhood; therefore, services need to be provided to meet the full range of gender-specific preferences to ensure the optimal health and well-being of every woman.

WOMEN'S HEALTH & REPRODUCTIVE LIFE PLANNING

Women in the United States make up over half the national population and generally have an overall longer life expectancy than men. Yet, the U.S. healthcare system regularly fails to meet the essential healthcare needs of American women, specifically those of reproductive age. Throughout their lives, women face unique gender-specific health challenges, including menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause, partner violence-related threats, as well as potential postpartum complications/depression, all of which require dedicated and highly specialized medical attention.

The personal health of a mother directly and significantly impacts the health of their child/ren, as well as overall family well-being. Understanding and effectively managing the potential for pregnancy is an important aspect of health for women of reproductive age. Approximately 40% of pregnancies, both in Hawai'i and the United States, are unintended, meaning the pregnancy was unplanned or not desired at this time. Reproductive life planning is a crucial process that enables women and their families, with the support of their healthcare provider, to better decide for themselves whether, when, and how to have children.

For women who wish to become pregnant, culturally supportive preconception counseling and care are crucial. Cessation of alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use; timely screening for and managing chronic disease conditions; monitoring for mental health and stress indicators; ensuring safe and supportive social relationships; enhancing economic security; optimizing healthy eating; and exercising regularly all improve the chances of a healthy, successful pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum recovery.

For women who do not desire pregnancy, the full range of contraceptive services should be discussed and offered, along with needed supports for successful compliance. Women who are unsure or ambivalent about pregnancy should be made aware of all options and the array of services that are available to them.

INDICATORS

Increase the proportion of adolescents and women ages 15-44 with a preventive medical visit in the last 12 months

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2020	74.6%
Target	2030	83.6%

Increase the proportion of pregnancies that are intended via reproductive life planning

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2020	62.7%
Target	2030	69.7%

Reduce the birth rate among teens women ages 15-19 years per 1,000 females

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2020	11.7%
Target	2030	7.7%

RELATED OBJECTIVE



Healthy People 2030



Healthy People 2030



Community Health
Needs Assessment

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Promote optimal maternal health care by working with agency and community partners to establish a statewide maternal health task force, along with the development of a state maternal health strategic plan.
- ❖ Identify and address access barriers to reproductive health care for disparate populations.
- ❖ Ensure optimal nutritional supports and nutrition counseling for lower-income pregnant and postpartum women through WIC services.
- ❖ Provide comprehensive reproductive health services to women and men who are uninsured or insured through contracts with community-based service organizations that have the capacity to address reproductive health care needs.
- ❖ Provide targeted evidence-based reproductive educational programs to educate adolescents on strategies and supports for healthy youth development, as well as pregnancy prevention and reproductive health services referrals for at-risk youth.

HEALTHY PREGNANCY & POSTPARTUM CARE

Pregnancy, delivery, and the postpartum period are critical and life-altering health periods for both maternal and infant health. Pregnancy leads to a wide range of significant hormonal, biological, and physiological changes in a woman's body as the fetus grows. A fetus also goes through crucial periods of growth and development throughout the course of a pregnancy, which draws on the mother's existing physical reserves to provide the fetus with essential growth nutrients and other needs.

Certain medical conditions, whether preexisting or those that develop during pregnancy, can cause significant health complications for the woman and/or her fetus. Early and continuous prenatal care, particularly in the first trimester, provides a range of targeted evidence-based clinical services, including monitoring fetal development, screening for potential risks, health promotion and education counseling, and management of health problems that arise. These services increase the likelihood of a safe and healthy pregnancy and delivery for both mother and infant.

A culturally respectful and competent healthcare provider will provide their pregnant patient with recommendations on optimal nutrition for a healthy pregnancy, vitamin and mineral supplements, and safe exercises to help reduce physical discomforts from pregnancy and help with postpartum recovery. Addressing mental health issues and managing daily stress, especially with the state's high cost of living, is also critical to a healthy pregnancy, as well as postpartum recovery. Pregnancy is an opportune time to promote improving personal health behaviors, such as the cessation of alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use.

The woman's health provider also typically advises their patient about safe vaccinations and medications versus those not recommended during pregnancy. Many women may be unaware that pregnant and postpartum women have a higher risk for more severe illnesses, such as COVID-19, than nonpregnant people. Providers will emphasize the importance of timely and safe vaccinations for COVID-19 and the flu and other preventive care for their pregnant patients. Also important is a discussion about reproductive health planning to ensure that women have the appropriate contraception in the postpartum period, thus averting an unplanned or unintended pregnancy.

Postpartum care is crucial to women because they are at risk for serious and even life-threatening health complications in the post-delivery days and weeks. This is the time for the woman's body to recover from the significant changes that occur with the challenges and stresses of pregnancy, labor, and delivery. Women, as caregivers and household leads, too

often ignore or delay action on their own maternal health concerns when other demands on their time and energy prevail, including the care of a newborn. Visiting their provider post-delivery helps to ensure that they are slowly recovering from the pregnancy while addressing their postpartum needs and issues responsively.

INDICATORS

Increase the percentage of at-risk women who receive prenatal care, beginning in their first trimester

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2022	69.6%
Target	2030	76.6%

Increase the percentage of at-risk women who followed through with a postpartum checkup with their provider within 12 weeks after giving birth

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2022	92.4%
Target	2030	99.4%

Increase the percentage of at-risk women who follow through with a postpartum checkup and receive recommended postpartum care recommendations from their provider

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2022	80.3%
Target	2030	88.3%

Increase the percentage of at-risk women who receive screening for depression or anxiety prior to or following a recent birth

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2022	84.7%
Target	2030	91.7%

RELATED OBJECTIVE



Healthy People 2030



Community Health Needs Assessment



Healthy People 2030

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Support reproductive and primary care health services for uninsured and under-insured women and their partners via funding and technical support and assistance.
- ❖ Provide leadership and support to the State Maternal Mortality and Domestic Violence Mortality Reviews to help identify initiatives/interventions that can be utilized to help prevent maternal and domestic violence-related deaths.
- ❖ Ensure optimal access to a nutritious food package and pregnancy-specific nutritional counseling to lower-income pregnant and postpartum women and their children ages 0-5 through WIC services.
- ❖ Provide a range of evidence-based home visiting services for identified at-risk pregnant women and families with children ages 0-5 years old, utilizing community-based family services organizations.
- ❖ Support and promote the work of the Hawai'i Maternal Infant Health Collaborative, which works to improve health outcomes for pregnant people and their infants.
- ❖ Work with diverse maternal health service providers statewide to develop and disseminate informational and educational resources that enhance and promote access to available prenatal and postpartum health services.
- ❖ Monitor and assess maternal health issues and workforce shortages, particularly in rural neighbor island communities.

CHILD/ADOLESCENT HEALTH & SAFETY

Optimal health in the first years of life strengthens crucial developing biological systems that enable infants and children to thrive and grow into healthy adolescents and adults. Positive early learning and growth experiences also provide infants and children with a foundation for building optimal brain development, which supports the essential broad range and strength of [skills and learning capacities](#) throughout their lifespan.

Infants who are provided nourishment via breastfeeding, a safe sleep environment, and consistent healthy food security are more likely to achieve and maintain stronger and more resilient building blocks in the early stages of life.

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage that builds on major lifelong physical, psychological, and social development. As they transition from childhood to young adulthood, adolescents face challenging physical and emotional growth, gradually learning when and how to navigate their own individual responsibility for good lifelong health habits.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health for children, adolescents, and families has received greater attention as an urgent public health crisis. There is greater recognition that mental health is an essential part of overall health, and all institutions serving children and youth (education, community, and childcare settings) are responding to the challenge of ensuring available services despite severe workforce shortages.

It is recommended that all children and adolescents have access to an age-appropriate medical home that provides regular medical visits that cover a comprehensive set of preventive and treatment services.

These core services help to ensure healthy child and adolescent development, ensure early screening to identify potential health risks, and provide a set of recommended immunizations that help to keep children optimally healthy and prevent certain diseases.

Also essential is targeted and age-appropriate health information and education that helps the child develop a lifetime of health-promoting behaviors. Establishing and maintaining a medical home or a regular source of age-appropriate healthcare for every child and adolescent is a key strategy that promotes quality and continuity of care for a lifetime of optimal health.

INDICATORS

Increase the proportion of mothers who exclusively breastfed their infants through 6 months of age

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2020	26.6%
Target	2030	32.6%

RELATED OBJECTIVE



Healthy People 2030

Increase the proportion of infants placed to sleep on a separate approved sleep surface

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2022	23.5%
Target	2030	29.5%



Healthy People 2030

Reduce the percentage of infants and children ages 0-11 whose households were identified as food-insufficient in the past year

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	34.1%
Target	2030	40.1%

Increase the number of infants, children and adolescents ages 0-17 who have an identified Medical Home or regular healthcare provider

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	46.6%
Target	2030	52.6%



Healthy People 2030

Increase the percentage of adolescents ages 12-17 who have had a preventive medical visit in the past year

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	66.9%
Target	2030	72.9%



Healthy People 2030

INDICATORS

Increase the percentage of adolescents ages 3-17 who receive needed mental health treatment or counseling

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	57.5%
Target	2030	63.5%

RELATED OBJECTIVE



Healthy People 2030

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Strengthen and support programs that provide more mother-to-mother peer support and peer counseling to support successful breastfeeding.
- ❖ Provide breast pumps and breastfeeding support and education to lower-income new mothers.
- ❖ Through WIC services, ensure optimal access to nutritious food packages and nutrition counseling for lower-income pregnant and postpartum women and their children ages 0-5.
- ❖ Increase public and provider awareness of the importance of Safe Sleep by providing safe sleep information and education, including public service announcements and digital and social media.
- ❖ Provide evidence-based home visiting services for at-risk families with children through kindergarten entry.
- ❖ Administer the Hawai'i Child Death Review System to conduct a comprehensive and multidisciplinary review of child deaths 0-17 years to understand the risk factors of child deaths and identify recommendations to prevent future deaths to keep children safe and healthy.
- ❖ Support workforce training for pediatric providers on child/youth mental health topics and establish a consultative service to address mental health concerns for pediatric medical providers.
- ❖ Develop strong, sustained partnerships with diverse community health and youth service providers to better promote adolescent health and medical homes, as well as annual wellness visits.
- ❖ Work with diverse adolescent and youth service providers to develop and disseminate informational and educational resources to enhance and promote optimal access to adolescent preventive health services.
- ❖ Provide targeted resources, education, training, and learning opportunities for youth service providers and community health workers to better promote and enhance adolescent health, establish medical homes, and conduct annual wellness visits.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE NEEDS (CYSHCN)

Improving and protecting the health and well-being of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) is an essential population goal for maternal and child health.

CYSHCN are known to be at increased risk of having chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, and/or emotional conditions. These conditions include asthma, epilepsy, anxiety, autism, and learning disorders, among others. They generally require specialized health and educational support services to optimally develop and thrive, as each child's specific supports and needs will vary.

Survey data shows that there are significant differences between the health and well-being of CYSHCN and their families when compared to children with no identified special health care needs.

CYSHCN have been noted to experience poorer overall general health, less successful school engagement, greater challenges to their parent's health, as well as more risks for household poverty and overall material hardship for their families. For these reasons, CYSHCN and their families usually require specialized health, educational, economic, and social supports and assistance.

In Hawai'i, there are an estimated 41,437 CYSHCN, roughly 13.2% of the total population of 0–17-year-olds. This estimate is a significantly lower percentage of children/youth ages 0-17 years when compared to national estimates for CYSHCN (20.6%).² This lower estimate may be due, in part, to a lack of comprehensive identification and diagnostic services universally accessible to all families in Hawai'i.

The most frequent diagnostic qualification indicator for a CYSHCN child or adolescent in Hawai'i at this time is the documented use of or need for prescription medication (8.3%), followed by above-average use of or need for CYSHCN-specific medical, mental health, or educational services (7.4%); documented treatment or counseling for emotional or developmental problems (7.1%); the use of or need for specialized IEP therapies (OT, PT, speech, etc.) (3.9%); and identified or diagnosed functional limitations as compared to other children or adolescents of same age (3.4%).

INDICATORS

RELATED OBJECTIVE

Maintain the percentage of Hawai'i births receiving newborn metabolic screening

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ^{Error!}	2023	99.2%
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Target	2030	100%

Increase the percentage of children ages 0-5 years screened early and continuously for signs of developmental delay

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	34.6%
Target	2030	40.6%



Healthy People 2030

Increase the number of children with special health care needs who have an age and services-appropriate Medical Home or provider

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	18.1%
Target	2030	24.1%



Healthy People 2030

Increase the percentage of youth ages 14-21 years with identified special health care needs who receive services needed to successfully transition to adult health care

State	Year	Percentage
Baseline ¹	2021-22	18.1%
Target	2030	24.1%

STRATEGIES

- ❖ Provide mandated newborn metabolic screening and follow-up services for early detection of conditions that can affect a child's long-term health and survival.
- ❖ Provide mandated newborn hearing/screening and follow-up services for early detection of hearing loss that can affect learning, language, and speech milestones.
- ❖ Ensure that information and services are available to families and providers in order to provide access to needed developmental and other preventive childhood screenings statewide.
- ❖ Provide statewide mandated Early Intervention Services for children ages 0-3 who are identified as developmentally delayed or biologically at risk for developmental delay.
- ❖ Monitor and assess structural and genetic birth defects that may adversely affect health and development to better inform health policy, prevention, treatment strategies, and services.
- ❖ Ensure that all CYSCHN clients ages 0-21 who are served by the DOH Children with Special Health Needs Program have a qualified medical home and other identified needed services.
- ❖ Ensure that Youth with Special Health Care Needs ages 14-21 years receive appropriate needed transition planning supports via strong partnerships with other youth-serving agencies.
- ❖ Reduce the overall exposure to lead in children and adults to prevent adverse health impacts from lead poisoning.
- ❖ Ensure systemic leadership, coordination, and collaboration across all child and family-serving agencies statewide for optimal child health and well-being.

References

¹ Hawai'i Title V Maternal & Child Health Block Grant Report, July 2024

² All CYSHCH data is from the National Survey of Children's Health 2021-2022. The small sample size for Hawai'i allows for only statewide estimates.