

Janet T. Mills
Governor

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Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
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Notice of Maternity and/or Newborn Care Changes

Purpose statement: The purpose of this policy is to ensure the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), surrounding hospitals, local EMS, fire and law enforcement services and registered patients are notified when a Maine birthing hospital either temporarily or permanently changes the maternity and newborn services they offer.

Policy background: In 2020-21, DHHS underwent the process of assessing the maternity and newborn Levels of Care (LOC) with each hospital in the State of Maine. The hospitals offering labor and delivery services and newborn care provided information to DHHS, which outlined their resources and capacity to provide care, and a joint determination between DHHS and the hospitals was done to determine the appropriate LOC (1, 2, 3, or 4) for each service. The LOC are publicly posted on the Maine CDC website.

There are times when a hospital may need to suspend or close the labor and delivery department or change the LOC they are providing. The Department requests an opportunity to review capacity and resources with the licensee as the LOC is a joint determination. This information will be used by surrounding communities to identify the closest hospital that offers the appropriate LOC needed by pregnant people and/or newborn at any given time.

Temporary or Permanent Termination of Maternity and/or Newborn Care

Hospitals should provide notice of temporary closure at least 30 days prior to the effective date, and 120 days prior to the effective date, for a permanent termination of service. In cases when such notice cannot be done, the hospital should provide notice soon as reasonably practical for a temporary termination of service, by sending a Change in Service Notification to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services Division of Licensing and Certification (DLC) State House Station #11 41 Anthony Avenue Augusta, ME 04333. DLC will share the notice of closure information received with the DHHS Child Health Officer and the Maine CDC Maternal and Child Health Program Director. The notice should include:

- Hospital Name;
- Contact Person with Name, Title, Email, and Phone Number;
- Date/Time of change;
- Statement noting whether the notice is for Temporary or Permanent Termination of Service and the Reason for Termination;
- A list and description of notifications sent to:
 - Surrounding hospitals within 50 miles and Level 2/3/4 Newborn Nurseries
 - All local EMS, fire, and law enforcement services
 - All registered patients that are affected by the change
- How the hospital provided public notification;
- Plan for emergency care; and

- The hospital’s plan for policy and procedure development and review around maternity emergencies for the hospital and local EMS agencies, including a plan for training Emergency Department and Family Practice staff on emergency obstetric care that incorporates teaching with didactic and simulation, if one exists. It is recommended that each hospital adopts one, however, if your hospital does not have one, please state that in the notification letter.

Change in Level of Care for Maternity and Newborn Services (Level 1, 2, 3, or 4)

Provide notice of at least 30 days and within 120 days notice for a proposed change in LOC to the Maine CDC Maternal and Child Health Program Director who will notify the DHHS Chief Child Health Officer. The notice should include:

- Hospital Name;
- Contact Person with Name, Title, Email, and Phone Number;
- Date/Time of proposed change; and
- An outline for the proposed change in LOC and reasons for change.

The Maine CDC Maternal and Child Health Program Director will schedule a virtual or on-site meeting with the hospital to review the proposed change in LOC. The meeting will include the Maine CDC Maternal and Child Health Program Director, a Neonatologist, a Maternal-Fetal Medicine provider, the Maine CDC Perinatal Nurse Outreach Educator, the DHHS Chief Child Health Officer, and representatives from the hospital who should include the Medical and Nursing Directors of the Newborn Nursery and Maternity Service, Respiratory Therapy, and the Quality Assurance Office. The Maine CDC may ask the hospital to complete the Federal CDC LOCATE tool to assess the proposed LOC, if this tool was not completed within the last two years.

After meeting with the hospital and the Maine CDC to discuss the LOC designation and agreement is reached on the level of care, the hospital should send notifications to:

- Surrounding hospitals within 50 miles and Level 2/3/4 Newborn Nurseries
- All local EMS, fire, and law enforcement services
- All registered patients that are affected by the change
- Public notification to include ensuring notice is posted on hospital website

Additionally, the Maine CDC will update the map of Birthing Hospitals with Levels of Care that is publicly posted on their website and this document with the new Levels of Care. The Maine CDC will notify the EMS-Children (EMS-C) coordinator at Maine EMS of the changes so they can share the updated information with EMS organizations. The Maine CDC Perinatal Nurse Outreach Educator will notify the Perinatal Nurse Leadership Group with this updated document.

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