



Division of Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Workforce Development



Partnerships in Action

The Screening and Treatment for [Maternal Depression and Related Behavioral Disorders \(MDRBD\) Program](#) supports seven states to implement programs that address maternal mental health conditions that often affect women during and after pregnancy. Some awardees recently formed **partnerships and other collaborations** to advance their work in telehealth-based consultation, training, and care coordination for primary care providers. Here, we feature the efforts of **Kansas Connecting Communities**, a 2018 MDRBD awardee.

Evidence-Based Best Practices for Partnership Success

A shortage of mental health providers in rural and other underserved areas often leaves communities, especially MCH populations, with unmet needs. Effective partnerships can address barriers to accessing care by developing and enhancing mental health services.

Research has identified a number of factors that define effective partnerships:

- A **shared approach to partnership** in which partners share risk, responsibility, resources, and rewards can establish mutual trust to help achieve their common goals.
- Partnerships should be **community focused**, concentrating on a community's specific residents, needs, and services.
- Clinical training partnerships, in which university-based experts train and consult with trusted local primary care providers, can **build providers' capacity in mental health services**.

For MCH services, developing clearly defined goals and strategies that include multiple partners, along with adequate funding and organized infrastructure, can lead to successful partnerships. For example, the Health Resources and Services Administration's [Early Childhood](#)

[Systems Portfolio](#) provides examples of projects that incorporate partnerships to serve MCH populations.

Kansas Connecting Communities: Partnerships for Improving Perinatal Behavioral Health Outcomes in Kansas

Kansas Connecting Communities ([KCC](#)) aims to expand and improve pregnant and postpartum women's mental health by building the capacity of health care providers (HCPs) to screen, assess, treat, and refer patients. Its services include telehealth-based psychiatric consultations, peer support referrals, training.

Partnership Profile: KCC leverages its partners' complementary areas of expertise to improve perinatal mental health care on the ground, where it matters. But it also sees the big picture and creates a model for the integration of mental health care with obstetric and postpartum care, using evidence-based best practices.

Kansas Perinatal Quality Collaborative (KPQC)

About [KPQC](#):

- Works to improve maternal health outcomes
- Aims to reduce maternal deaths by working with birthing facilities and HCPs to use evidence-based, quality improvement practices

For the MDRBD program:

- Provides virtual training to birthing facilities, focusing on postpartum care transition
- Provide five KPQC sites with additional funding and intensive technical assistance (TA) from KCC to implement mental health/substance use disorders screenings, interventions, and referrals

CKF Addiction Treatment

About [CKF Addiction Treatment](#):

- A substance use disorder (SUD) treatment center in central Kansas and state-designated women's SUD treatment program
- Offers robust telehealth services
- Supports TA related to behavioral health integration and telehealth implementation

Through a contractual agreement, CKF Addiction Treatment supports KCC by:

- Sharing best practice recommendations around SUD screening, referral integration, and telehealth
- Operating a [Provider Consultation Line](#), which HCPs can call for clinical consultations
- Offering patient psychiatric assessments, with an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse/Nurse Practitioner for 2 hours per week, which has been especially helpful for communities with limited psychiatric referral options

- Providing resource and referral assistance

Learn more about Kansas Connecting Communities at www.kansasmch.org/connecting-communities.asp and the MDRBD program at <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/maternal-child-health-initiatives/mental-behavioral-health/mdrbd>

Best,
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