

Project Abstract: Throughout its footprint, Sanford Health educates obstetric care providers and patients, following established protocols to reduce the number of preterm births. Still, too many infants don't get the strongest start possible in life. Sanford Health's three major obstetrics hubs – Bemidji, Minn.; Fargo, N.D.; and Sioux Falls, S.D. – serve uniquely distinct populations. This necessitates employing more than one model of enhanced prenatal care to address high-risk maternal characteristics within the same integrated system. These factors make Sanford Health expressly qualified to develop and implement a project under the Strong Start for Mothers & Newborns Initiative.

Sanford One Strong Beginning (A Provider Project) is at once a clinically based health-improvement program and a sophisticated data-gathering research project. A total budget of \$2,309,760.00 will provide the necessary staff, training and other program costs to build a solid support network for expectant mothers who most need it. One Strong Beginning expects to fund enhanced, nonmedical prenatal care for 4,055 or more women at as many as 41 sites. These dollars will benefit women whose Medicaid coverage is administered by agencies in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa. Sanford Health also expects to provide similar services for an additional 2,200 or more South Dakota Medicaid beneficiaries during the same period. Funding for South Dakota Medicaid patients is not included in this proposal, but instead is part of a separate partnership application from the State of South Dakota. Sanford Health has worked closely with the State of South Dakota to assure that critical metrics are consistent.

In addition, Sanford Health's unified, electronic medical records system enables the project to **track gestational age, birthweight and other data throughout the intervention period, both for intervention infants and for a comparison population.** This integrated system also makes it possible to **access gestational age and birthweight on births from a historical baseline period that spans more than two years prior to the start of One Strong Beginning.**

Sanford Health has defined several key aims to reach goals outlined by the Strong Start opportunity. Through One Strong Beginning, **Sanford Health proposes to build a comprehensive, supportive system for high-risk pregnant and post-partum Medicaid patients.** The overarching goal is to reduce the number of preterm (<37 weeks) births and low birthweight (<2,500 grams) infants, and to improve the overall health outcomes of pregnant women and newborns. To attain this system of care, One Strong Beginning:

1. Offers Medicaid patients two models of enhanced prenatal care – Maternity Care Home programs in Bemidji and Fargo, and CenteringPregnancy in the Sioux Falls Region.
2. Capitalizes on all points of access and marketing materials to increase the number of Medicaid beneficiaries who seek and receive prenatal care during the first trimester.
3. Integrates culturally appropriate communication channels to improve interaction with patients of various ethnicities and collaboration with Native American tribal health.
4. Integrates a smoking cessation program and educates women on the devastating effects of alcohol abuse and drug use during pregnancy.
5. Integrates behavioral health screenings and resources during pregnancy.
6. Integrates breastfeeding education and follow-up support to increase breastfeeding rates.
7. Monitors and reports results through the unified Sanford One Chart electronic medical records system, using information to improve model design and delivery of care.

Each enhanced prenatal model provides a framework to elevate patient experience and advance positive outcomes.