

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The goal of Every Woman Connecticut Learning Collaborative (EWCTLC) is to increase the expertise and self-efficacy of healthcare workers, to implement routine pregnancy intention screening and appropriate care, education, and services to improve birth spacing and increase pregnancy intentionality and discussions around health before and between conceptions. Overall, 326 providers from 39 cities/towns and 9 statewide programs have been involved.

Collaborative members receive access to implement One Key Question (OKQ) screening in their respective sites and programs, by asking women, “Would you like to become pregnant in the next year?” The screening tool is used by community-based teams of clinicians and partners in communities with high volume/burden of poor birth outcomes who demonstrate readiness for this program. The Connecticut Department of Public Health is incorporating One Key Question screening into several Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services sponsored programs that provide “whole person care” to women and men of childbearing ages who are suffering from mental health illness, substance use disorders, and other chronic comorbidities within a behavioral health medical home framework.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

This work will be done under the auspices of the Connecticut Women’s Consortium. Consulting services will continue to be provided by Marijane Carey of Carey Consulting. Carey Consulting will manage the Advisory Committee, expand partnerships, respond to evaluation recommendations and engage members of Every Women Connecticut (EWCT) to increase provider knowledge and self-efficacy. Carey Consulting will help providers deliver promising and evidence-based education, care, and services related to pregnancy intentionality, optimal birth spacing, and pre-/interconception health.

Based on the evaluation report prepared for the Advisory Committee by Dr. Megan Smith through Elevate, a policy lab at Yale School of Medicine, beginning this year evaluation recommendations will be addressed. The recommendations are: 1) clarifying EWCT’s mission and objectives; 2) clarifying the role of Advisory Committee members and other involved in EWCT’s work; 3) sustainability planning and 4) measuring impact. Internal work will also include updating the OKQ manual to include information and guidance on providing care during a pandemic. It also includes information on how federal and state legislation, (The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and the Comprehensive Addiction Recovery Act (CARA)), impacts women who deliver an infant believed to have been substance exposed. The manual update will be informed by the information and resources presented in the two EWCT-sponsored workshops on CAPTA and CARA.

Externally EWCT is strategically planning to maximize its reach by establishing relationships with other organizations and entities. The specific groups are:

- The Women’s Services Practice Improvement Collaborative (WSPIC) - WSPIC is co-sponsored by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and the CT Women’s Consortium. Collaborative members are the Department’s treatment programs for women. WSPIC is a conduit for a rapid response by EWCT to needs identified WSPIC members.
- The Women and Opioid Workgroup - This is another DMHAS-sponsored group designed to communicate and coordinate services for women dealing with opioid use.
- The Medicaid Strategy Group (MSG) - MSG is a coalition of health advocates working together to improve and protect the quality and reach of HUSKY/Medicaid programs in Connecticut through administrative and legislative advocacy.
- Health Equity Solutions, COVID-19 Outreach - This ongoing outreach effort is collecting information about the impact on COVID-19 on underserved communities to help center health equity in Connecticut’s response and recovery efforts.

- The ACES Task Force - This Task Force was convened by the Women's Consortium to support efforts to address racism in trauma. Participation in these groups expands partnership potential as it increases EWCT's platform for addressing pre-/interconception healthcare, health equity and racism from a comprehensive and holistic perspective.

Participation in WSPIC and the Women and Opioids Workgroup supports and strengthens EWCT relationship with DMHAS, which includes the Department offering, for the past two years, EWCT-sponsored workshops on OKQ/human sexuality/reproductive health and on implicit bias as well as creating an on-line OKQ training module.

CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence's (CCADV) representative on the EWCT Advisory Committee will help to facilitate opportunities to present OKQ to CCADV member agencies.

EWCT will continue to support the use of the Xedos system developed by Stellar RX, a pharmacy distribution services company based in Pennsylvania. The XpeDose system is a unit that can be placed at a clinical site, for the stocking and distribution of a comprehensive array of contraceptive methods, at no cost to the site, essentially erasing the barrier of upfront provider cost for stocking. This also ensures same-day availability of the patient's chosen form of birth control. Stellar RX has encountered a number of unexpected challenges to obtaining Medicaid approval to offer the XpeDose in Connecticut. Once a Medicaid approval is obtained, EWCT will work with Stellar RX in introducing the system to community health centers.

EWCT will use the EWCT Learning Collaborative (EWCTL) as the major vehicle to increase provider expertise and self-efficacy in implementing: routine pregnancy intention screening and appropriate care, education, and services. The aim is to ultimately improve birth spacing, increase pregnancy intentionality, as well as increase the proportion of Connecticut women who deliver a live birth and report discussing pre-/interconception health with a healthcare worker. The Collaborative will also support implementers of OKQ.

Currently there are over 350 EWCTL members consisting of OKQ implementers and/or those who have attended an EWCT sponsored training. EWCTL members will receive at least quarterly Notes of Interest through Constant Contact supported emails and at least two trainings on topics identified by EWCTL members or through the groups identified above (WSPIC, the Women and Opioid Workgroup, Health Equity Solutions' COVID-19 Outreach, and the ACEs Task Force). Opportunities for local networking and one on one meetings will also be offered virtually until it is safe to resume in person meetings.

Planned Parenthood will continue to assure that all clients who receive a reproductive health exam participate in the development of a Reproductive Life Plan. The discussions are conducted by a licensed healthcare provider and the client.

COVID RELATED WORK

Every Women Connecticut (EWCT) and Every Woman Connecticut Learning Collaborative (EWCTL) will be addressing and responding to the impact of COVID-19 and the increased awareness around health equity, social justice, and social determinants of health. With guidance from EWCT Advisory Committee members and implementers of OKQ, lessons learned from providing clinical and non-clinical services during the perinatal period in a pandemic will be shared with EWCTL, the MCH Coalition and the SHIP Advisory Council.