

Investing in Maternal Health to Empower Communities

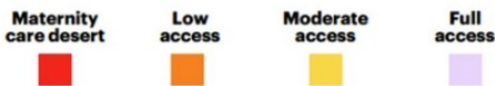
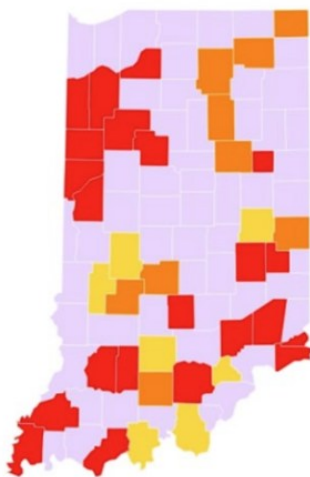
March 2026

Indiana has made progress in reducing infant mortality, yet access to maternity care remains a critical challenge. [Twenty-two](#) of Indiana's 92 counties are classified as maternity care deserts, and [14 hospitals](#) have closed their OB units since 2020, citing staff shortages as a primary reason. With only [613 actively practicing](#) OB/GYN physicians statewide and [federal projections](#) indicating a 7.7% decline by 2030, workforce shortages continue to limit access to timely, essential care for Hoosier women and families. Strengthening the maternal health workforce pipeline is a critical component of addressing these gaps and supporting Indiana's communities.

The Indiana Health Workforce Council, established in 2024, brings together clinicians, educators, employers, and state leaders to create an intentional strategy for strengthening the state's health workforce capacity.

Focus Areas

- Expand graduate medical education positions and rural rotations in OB/GYN
- Enhance OB/GYN training for family physicians
- Assess the necessity of an Indiana CNM training program and improve visibility



OB/GYN Residencies

Indiana has [three accredited](#) OB/GYN residency programs offering 20 first-year positions annually, all located in urban centers. [Research](#) shows that more than 55% of physicians who complete OB/GYN residencies practice in the state where they trained, making in-state residency expansion a strategic investment.

Rural communities face unique challenges in supporting full residency programs due to lower [procedural volumes](#), but rural rotations during residency training have [been shown](#) to increase the likelihood of long-term rural practice.

Recommendations:

- Support rural clinical rotations for OB/GYN residents with funding to support preceptors, housing costs, and administrative overhead.
- Prioritize OB/GYN residency expansion in Graduate Medical Education Board with state funded appropriations, with emphasis on those including rural training sites.
- Add rural health perspectives to the Graduate Medical Education Board to ensure representation in funding decisions.

Family Medicine OB/GYN Training

Family medicine physicians have [traditionally](#) played a key role in maternity care, particularly in rural areas. More than 25% of Indiana's [practicing](#) family medicine physicians offer obstetric services, and nearly all 92 counties have a family medicine physician. Expanding this training through enhanced residency tracks or fellowship programs could significantly increase rural maternity care access.

Recommendations:

- Incentivize higher education institutions to expand OB/GYN training in family medicine residencies beyond ACGME minimums and support development of OB fellowship programs
- Convene hospital and health system leaders through IDOH to strategize strengthening pathways for family medicine physicians to receive training and contribute to obstetric care



Certified Nurse-Midwives

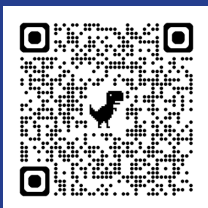
[Certified Nurse-Midwives](#) provide comprehensive maternity care throughout pregnancy, labor, delivery, and postpartum. [Research](#) links midwifery care to improved outcomes, including reductions in preterm birth. Indiana currently has [250 licensed CNMs](#) but no in-state degree programs, potentially hindering recruitment and retention. A recent survey, supported by the Council, found that 55% of Indiana hospitals have considered integrating CNMs into clinical processes, and 20% already employ them, demonstrating workforce demand.

Recommendations:

- Leverage Indiana's existing nursing school infrastructure to identify a higher education champion to establish an in-state CNM training program.
- Modify strategy for CNM workforce reporting to by utilizing CNM licenses as a definitive workforce identifier to capture broader information and insights.

Moving Forward

These recommendations represent a potential strategy to address Indiana's maternal health workforce challenges. By expanding graduate medical education opportunities, supporting innovative care delivery models, and developing new training pathways, Indiana can ensure that all Hoosier women and families have access to high-quality maternity care regardless of where they live.



Contact the Health Workforce Council
for more information:

<https://www.in.gov/health/directory/office-of-the-commissioner/health-workforce-council/>

