

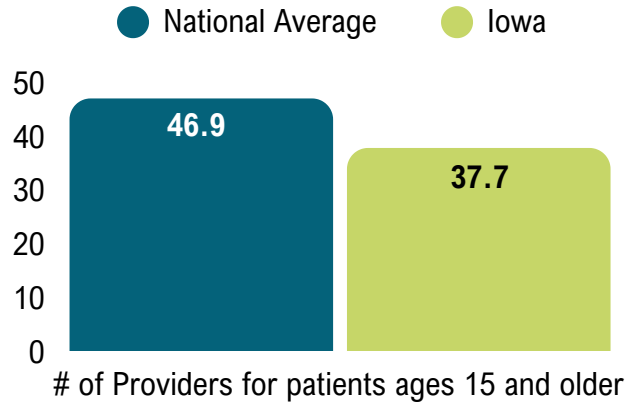
Maternal Health Workforce

Iowa ranks 45th in the nation for women's health providers per capita (2023). In 2023, 36,504 births took place in Iowa.

Maternal health programs ensure pregnant and postpartum women receive early and adequate access to prenatal care, access to evidence-based support services like doulas and lactation consultants, and access to high-quality obstetrical care during and after delivery.

Source: America's Health Rankings (AHR).

Obstetricians, Gynecologists and Midwives per 100,000 women in 2023.



Rural Impact:

From 2019 to 2023, family medicine physicians attended the most births in rural counties (58.1%), yet the number of family medicine physicians who delivered at least one infant has decreased 17% within the same timeframe. Family medicine training does not incorporate obstetrical care, despite family medicine physicians attending over half of births in rural counties. The number of Certified Nurse Midwives who delivered at least one infant increased 11% from 2019 to 2023.

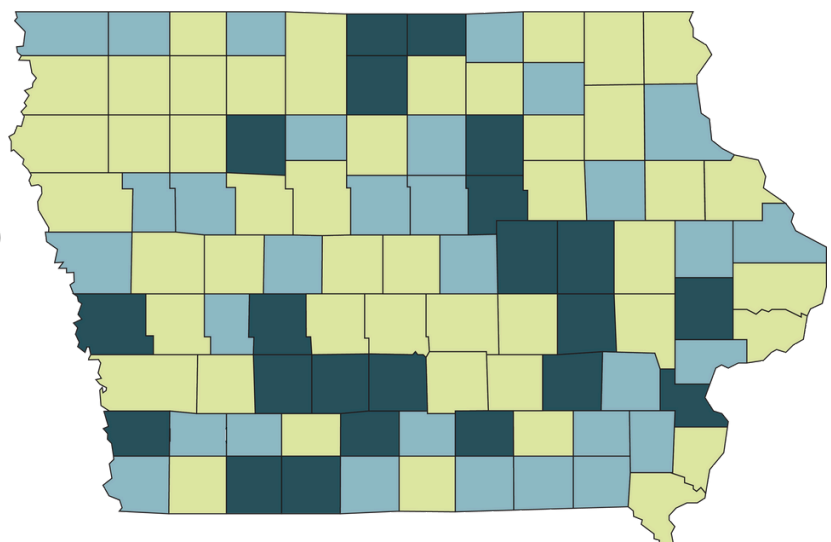
Source: Iowa HHS. Access to obstetrical care in Iowa calendar years 2019-2023.

Obstetrics (OB) Centers

Over 40 obstetrical units have closed in Iowa since 2000. Facilities with low volume are vulnerable to closure due to challenges with staffing, finances, and maintaining staff experience to provide safe care.

County Level Availability of Facilities with OB Units

- Counties with OB Units (46)
- Counties that have never had an OB Unit (22)
- Counties with OB Units that have closed (31)



What is HHS Doing?



Increasing access to preventive services by training doulas and establishing reimbursement mechanisms for doula services.



Equipping providers with tools and resources to utilize standardized protocols in the healthcare setting.



Implementing innovative workforce strategies to improve access in rural areas of the state.

Iowa Perinatal Quality Care Collaborative (IPQCC)

Iowa HHS provides financial support with federal and state funding to support the IPQCC, which includes:



Statewide Perinatal Care Team: Provides support to Iowa's Regionalized System of Perinatal Care in the form of consultation with regional and primary providers, and evaluation of the quality of care delivered;



Iowa Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health (AIM) program: Provides technical support to participating birthing hospitals to implement Patient Safety Bundles (PSBs) to improve outcomes.



Obstetrical workforce initiatives: Including OB simulation training, rural obstetrical residency opportunities, and OB fellowship opportunities for family medicine physicians.



Neonatal PSB implementation: Similar to the AIM program, the neonatal side of the IPQCC focuses on quality improvement initiatives in birthing hospitals related to neonatal outcomes. To date, the IPQCC has initiated the first neonatal PSB.

Forty-four of Iowa's fifty-six birthing hospitals participated in the initial AIM Patient Safety Bundle, with all taking part in two subsequent PSBs on Obstetrical Hemorrhage and Hypertension in Pregnancy.

Planned strategies (included in grant work plans or existing projects):

- Implementing the AIM Maternal Mental Health and Substance PSBs in three pilot communities by 2026.
- Providing obstetrical simulation training to birthing hospitals and emergency departments without a birthing unit.
- Coordinating implementation of family medicine obstetrical fellowship training programs allows family medicine physicians to obtain training on attending births and conducting C-sections.

Proposed strategies (awaiting approval and/or funding):

- Establish a pilot Perinatal Psychiatric Access Program (PPAP) for providers in Iowa to access consultation and education on managing mood and substance use disorders in pregnant and postpartum women. Project plan to be established by September 30, 2025.
- Support the Governor's recommendations to add doulas to the list of Medicaid covered provider types and establish reimbursement rates and unbundling global payment for obstetrical services.