

Skills & Knowledge Recommendations to Support National Performance Measure 5 – Safe Sleep



1. Population Health

A renewed focus on MCH population health is key to achieving the NPMs in the era of health transformation. These skills enable Title V professionals to analyze how program interventions and their related health outcomes are distributed among a state’s MCH population. Population health skills complement all of Title V’s work, including program design and implementation, strategic partnerships and communication.

- a. Ability to conduct surveillance of safe sleep that allows public health practitioners to understand and respond to disparities in safe sleep practices

2. Strategic Planning & Program Design

Effective strategic planning and program design require the ability to base programs on defined goals and desired outcomes. Strategic planning should include a monitoring and evaluation system to track and monitor progress and inform program alterations as needed. Program design skills must ultimately be coupled with implementation, where program design is carried out.

- a. Ability to apply the socio-ecological framework to safe sleep
- b. Ability to ensure that evidence-based safe sleep promotion messages are included in home visiting and care coordination programs for which Title V provides oversight

3. Strategic Alliances & Effective Partnerships

The wide array of stakeholders and partners in the field of MCH, from providers and insurers to women and children, require a set of skills in strategically aligning Title V goals with those of their partners. In the Title V world, there is an increasing interest in engaging unlikely or nontraditional partners to achieve the NPMs. The skills in this category take that into account and include unique partner groups linked to this measure.

- a. Ability to collaborate with federally qualified health centers and school-based health centers to promote policy solutions to unsafe sleep practices
- b. Ability to partner with Medicaid and managed care organizations (MCOs) to collect and analyze data on sudden infant death syndrome/sudden unexplained infant death (SID/SUID)
- c. Ability to align safe sleep efforts with breastfeeding initiatives

4. Consumer Engagement/Cultural & Linguistic Brokering

Consumers are arguably the most important stakeholders in MCH work, thus skills in consumer engagement and cultural and linguistic brokering are essential to moving the needle for each NPM. In some cases, consumer engagement includes negotiating with other stakeholders on behalf of MCH populations. Closely linked with this skills category are skills in communication and strategic alliances.

- a. Skills to effectively engage expectant families, new parents and intergenerational families in designing safe sleep interventions
- b. Skills to engage families in needs assessment for safe sleep programs and policies
- c. Ability to effectively engage new parents as peer educators for safe sleep initiatives
- d. Skills to respectfully build relationships with families and communicate the importance of safe sleep practices using cultural understanding and humility
- e. Ability to be sensitive to the cultural norms that impact newborn sleep practices

5. Policy & Program Implementation

These skills ensure that MCH priorities are integrated into all aspects of policy and program implementation, as well as ensuring that policies and programs selected are well-aligned with NPMs and other MCH program goals. Implementing policies and programs with fidelity also requires skills in the implementation science drivers: technical and adaptive leadership; selection; training; coaching; systems intervention; facilitative administration; and decision support data systems.

- a. Skills to ensure high quality safe sleep counseling is embedded in programs for which Title V has authority
- b. Ability to provide state public health recognition (e.g., certificates, awards, news releases) to health providers, birth facilities, and others who work to reduce SIDS/SUID or lessen its impact on families
- c. Ability to leverage national safe sleep resources for a public education campaign, including distribution of materials to health providers, health department clinics, childcare centers and homes, and families in birth facilities
- d. Ability to conduct a performance improvement project that attempts to increase rates of safe sleep among enrollees in partnership with Medicaid and/or MCOs
- e. Ability to effectively communicate with policymakers about the value of laws requiring emergency medical technicians, firefighters, child care providers, and law enforcement officers to receive training on how to handle SID/SUID deaths
- f. Ability to advocate for adoption of a law that requires post-mortem examinations or autopsies when SID/SUID death is suspected
- g. Ability to create/maintain a child death/fatality review process that includes SID/SUID-specific protocols and SID/SUID experts

6. Communication

Communication skills support the creation and delivery of effective messages between MCH professionals, professional and community partners, and populations served by Title V. Effective communication ensures the delivery of appropriate messages to audiences in the way that they were intended and is key to all aspects of MCH work. These skills are linked closely with skills in strategic partnerships and cultural and linguistic brokering.

- a. Ability to effectively reach women of childbearing age with culturally appropriate and compelling safe sleep messages
- b. Skills to train hospital staff as necessary to effectively support safe sleep practices
- c. Skills to effectively navigate around potentially conflicting messages between safe sleep and breastfeeding

Knowledge

In addition to skills, each NPM requires a knowledge base that will help Title V progress effectively in the measure. Knowledge should be considered at the foundation of achieving all measures.

1. Safe Sleep Background & Recommendations

- a. Knowledge of benefits of safe sleep strategies
- b. Knowledge of risks of unsafe sleep practices, including SIDS and SUID:
- c. Knowledge of current guidelines and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations for safe sleep practices
- d. Knowledge of historical and cultural context of safe sleep practices in a given geographic area
- e. Knowledge of barriers to safe sleep practices reported by families
- f. Knowledge of existing statewide and national initiatives to promote safe sleep
- g. Knowledge of safe sleep messages that may appear contradictory to breastfeeding guidelines
- h. Knowledge of breastfeeding messages that may appear contradictory to safe sleep guidelines

2. Safe Sleep Policies & Strategies

- a. Knowledge of relevant environmental policies that support or undermine safe sleep practices
- b. Knowledge of policies (in hospitals, primary care settings, federally qualified health centers, etc.) that promote safe sleep and the relative effectiveness of these policies
- c. Knowledge of essential components of any relevant state and federal policies that facilitate access to safe sleep programs for pregnant women