

# Depression Screening Change Package

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**Rationale:** Affecting 1 in 7 women, perinatal depression is one of the most common medical complications during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Perinatal depression can be mild, moderate, or severe depression that occurs during pregnancy or in the first 12 months after delivery.<sup>1</sup> Although perinatal depression is treatable, the condition often goes unrecognized because the changes are typically attributed to normal pregnancy, such as changes in sleep, appetite, and libido. In addition, perinatal depression is often not identified or diagnosed due to shame and stigma associated with depression and due to lack of awareness among women, families, and providers.<sup>2</sup> Left unrecognized and untreated, perinatal depression and other mood disorders can have adverse effects on women, infants, and families. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that clinicians screen women at least once during the perinatal period for depression and anxiety symptoms using a standardized, validated tool.



Risk factors for perinatal depression include: history of depression, maternal anxiety, lack of social support, unintended pregnancy, domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV), breastfeeding problems, and life stress, including stressful life events during pregnancy or the early postpartum period, or traumatic birth experience.<sup>1</sup>

Data from a 2011 survey indicate that approximately 77% of women reported that their health care provider asked them about their mood or depression at some point during their perinatal period. Several depression screening tools have been validated for use during the pregnancy and postpartum period. To promote improvement in clinical outcomes, perinatal depression screening must be paired with appropriate follow-up and treatment when indicated, including medical therapy and/or referral of patients to appropriate behavioral health resources.<sup>1</sup>

Education on and screening for perinatal depression can occur during prenatal visits with Healthy Start women participants and/or during postpartum and newborn care visits. In addition to increasing awareness of and screening for perinatal depression, Healthy Start grantees should be prepared to refer Healthy Start women participants for followup behavioral health services when indicated. All cases of perinatal depression can be treated and Healthy Start women participants should know that help is available.

**Purpose/Objective:** This change package provides recommended strategies and a selection of resources and evidence-based practices to aid Healthy Start grantee organizations, partners and their staff in promoting depression screening and referral among Healthy Start women participants during the perinatal period. **Healthy Start Screening Tools**, available on the Healthy Start Epic Center website and referenced in the change package strategies, can be used to assist in comprehensive and consistent assessment of Healthy Start participant needs and standardized data collection to support monitoring and reporting on Healthy Start benchmarks.

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<sup>1</sup> ACOG. Screening for Perinatal Depression. Committee Opinion. Number 630, May 2015.

<sup>2</sup> HRSA MCHB. A Comprehensive Approach for Community-Based Programs to Address Intimate Partner Violence and Perinatal Depression. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013.

**Healthy Start Change Package Strategies for Perinatal Depression Screening**

**Healthy Start Program Goal:** Increase the proportion of Healthy Start women participants who receive depression screening and referral to 100%.

Level of Strategy	Strategy	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
<p><b>Program Level</b></p>	<p><b>Build Capacity to Screen for Depression</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Educate Healthy Start staff on perinatal depression and the importance of screening and referral to identify and treat women as indicated.</li> <li>➤ Train Healthy Start staff to discuss and conduct culturally and linguistically competent perinatal depression screening using validated screening tools.</li> <li>➤ Establish referral systems with local health care providers to coordinate referral and treatment for perinatal depression among Healthy Start women participants as indicated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">A Comprehensive Approach for Community-Based Programs to Address Intimate Partner Violence and Perinatal Depression</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Screening for Perinatal Depression</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Depression in Mothers: More Than the Blues (A Toolkit for Family Service Providers)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">4Ps Plus©</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)</a></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish a process in your program or workflow to educate and screen for (using a standardized validated tool) perinatal depression among Healthy Start women participants at least one time during the prenatal or postpartum period.</li> <li>➤ Integrate perinatal depression screening for Healthy Start women participants with other risk screenings and interventions during the pregnancy and/or postpartum periods (e.g., smoking, drug and alcohol use, IPV).</li> <li>➤ Implement a followup process with Healthy Start women participants identified via screening to have depressive symptoms to promote uptake of referral and resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">A Comprehensive Approach for Community-Based Programs to Address Intimate Partner Violence and Perinatal Depression</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Depression in Mothers: More Than the Blues (A Toolkit for Family Service Providers)</a></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Educate Healthy Start staff on ACA requirements for health insurers to offer certain preventive health services free of co-pays or coinsurance, including depression screening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Preventive Care Benefits for Adults</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Getting the Coverage You Deserve: What to Do If You Are Charged a Co-Payment, Deductible, or Co-Insurance for a Preventive Service</a></li> </ul>

Level of Strategy	Strategy	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
<b>Individual &amp; Family Level</b>	<p align="center"><b>Screen and Refer for Depression During the Prenatal and Postpartum Periods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss and provide education on perinatal depression with Healthy Start women participants during the prenatal and postpartum periods. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>KEY MESSAGING:</b> Perinatal depression can occur during pregnancy or within a year after the end of your pregnancy. It can be mild, moderate or severe. In all cases, help is available.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Screen all Healthy Start women participants for perinatal depression, using an evidence-based screening tool, at least once during the prenatal or postpartum period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>KEY QUESTIONS:</b> Over the past two weeks, how often have you experienced any of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Little interest or pleasure in doing things.</li> <li>– Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless.</li> <li>– <i>Refer to the <b>Healthy Start Screening Tools</b> for additional key questions</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Provide information on perinatal depression, local resources for depression, and coordinate a referral to a mental health center or primary care provider for perinatal depression treatment as indicated.</p> </li> <li>➤ Followup with all Healthy Start women participants referred for treatment for perinatal depression to ensure uptake of referral and treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Depression During and After Pregnancy: A Resource for Women, Their Families, and Friends</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Postpartum Depression Screening Scale (PDSS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">4Ps Plus©</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Healthy Start Screening Tools</a></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assist Healthy Start participants in enrolling in and obtaining health insurance to support access to treatment for perinatal depression and other preventive care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">From Coverage to Care</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Getting the Coverage You Deserve: What to Do If You Are Charged a Co-Payment, Deductible, or Co-Insurance for a Preventive Service</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Health Insurance Marketplace</a></li> </ul>

Level of Strategy	Strategy	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
Community Level	<b>Promote Awareness and Screening for Depression Among Community Providers and Partners</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Partner with community programs that serve women, children, and families (e.g., WIC, transitional housing, home visiting) to promote (1) awareness on perinatal depression and (2) integration of perinatal depression screening and referral into programs and services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">A Comprehensive Approach for Community-Based Programs to Address Intimate Partner Violence and Perinatal Depression</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Distribute cultural and linguistically competent education materials on perinatal depression to community partners and programs that serve women, children, and families.</li> <li>➤ Conduct outreach and education to health care providers in the community (e.g., primary care providers, obstetricians, and pediatric providers) on perinatal depression, and the providers' role in screening, referral and treatment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Postpartum Care</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Depression in Mothers: More Than the Blues (A Toolkit for Family Service Providers)</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Depression During and After Pregnancy: A Resource for Women, Their Families, and Friends</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Preventive Care Benefits for Adults</a></li> </ul>	

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\*This change package can be accessed electronically: <http://healthystartepic.org/healthy-start-approaches/strengthen-family-resilience/>