



MDPQC Parent and Baby Advisory Council Newsletter

December 2025

Latest Updates from the Parent and Baby Advisory Council (PBAC)

PBAC Highlights

1. PBAC members recently reviewed the latest MDPQC updates and engaged in a deep dive of data, focused on patient debriefs, respectful and equitable care and patient support after severe events.

The PBAC is available to assist with ideas to support improving your patient outcomes! We can help explore areas of opportunity within measures and offer suggestions, particularly surrounding patient experience.

2. The PBAC continues to provide insights on subjects relevant to hospitals, including patient education. Members emphasized the significance of patient education during the prenatal period, sharing their experiences and identifying areas of both effective practices and areas of improvement. Additionally, members discussed patient education topics they believe offer the greatest benefit to pregnant patients and their families.

Members provided feedback on a draft MDPQC patient-facing resource on "Reducing Your Baby's Risk for Hypoglycemia After Birth," providing feedback on format, visual

appeal, and literacy and language concerns. The recommendations from the PBAC were integrated into the final product and the handout is now on the MDPQC website in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

The PBAC is available to review patient-facing resources or tools that your institution has created, providing feedback on the document from the lens of patients and families.

3. The PBAC welcomed 10 new members with backgrounds in areas including infant loss, early childhood, mental health, and substance use. New members participated in an orientation that provided an overview of the MDPQC, detailed explanations of our initiatives, and discussed key MDPQC partners, including community stakeholders and outpatient providers. Additionally, members learned about their responsibilities and were briefed on the PBAC's recent accomplishments.

We encourage you to continue to share information about our PBAC with anyone who may be interested in participating. Interested individuals are invited to reach out to Yasmine Jackson at yjackson@hqi.solutions.

Looking Ahead:

The PBAC will provide feedback to the MDPQC on future initiatives. Members will review prospective maternal and neonatal initiative topics and, based on their experiences, share insights regarding Maryland's needs and how the PBAC can contribute to our initiatives.

Hospitals are encouraged to consider how they would like to see the PBAC support and participate in future initiatives. Please reach out to Yasmine Jackson at yjackson@hqi.solutions with suggestions or ideas.

Meet Our PBAC Members

Janelle Joyce-Pelsey, BSHS, CAP, CHW, IMH-E®, is a maternal and child health professional, mother, and military spouse.

Currently serving as an Engagement Specialist with the Maryland Department of Health's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, she specializes in culturally responsive health communication and community engagement focused on maternal and child health equity. With bilingual capabilities in Spanish and English, Janelle develops outreach materials that address health disparities among diverse populations.

As an Infant Family Associate (IMH-E®) and



**Janelle
Joyce-Pelsey**

Certified Community Health Worker, she advocates for relationship-focused, culturally sensitive practices that promote healthy child development. Janelle holds a Bachelor of Science in Health Studies and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Management and Leadership and a graduate certificate in Early Childhood Administration, Management, and Leadership.

She also serves on the Anne Arundel County Commission for Women and contributes to various maternal health advocacy organizations with her commitment to advancing health equity and amplifying family voices.

Mavhu Farai Wakatama Hargrove (Mbuya Mavhu) is a first generation Zimbabwean-American poet, writer, postpartum doula, and educator. She was born in the United States, then moved to Zimbabwe at age 3 where she stayed until after the birth of her first child.

Mbuya Mavhu now lives in Maryland with her husband and three children. She has provided "bana chimbusa" (traditional marital skills training) and postpartum doula services in her family and community for 15 years and has recently begun



Mbuya Mavhu

offering professional postpartum doula services.

Mbuya Mavhu co-created the NOURISH doula curriculum for the Black Women's Health Imperative, a pilot program at Morgan State University, bringing preconception education and full spectrum doula training to female students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Mbuya Mavhu has also been an educator and administrator at NationHouse, an African-centered school in Washington, D.C., for 21 years where she developed the current NationHouse literature course for students aged 5 to 18.

Rebecca "Becky" Smith, MPH, BSN, RN, is the Sr. Administrator of Maternal Child Health Programs for the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). She has been working with Montgomery County for 25 years helping to increase access to care for pregnant, postpartum, and parenting families.

Becky had her first public health job as Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala, working as a teen health educator. This job shaped just about everything she has done since. After her time



Rebecca Smith

in Guatemala, Becky earned her master's degree in public health and went to work in the maternal child health field in Columbus, Ohio at the Columbus Health Department. She was then the Executive Director of the Central Ohio Lamaze Childbirth and Parenting Association, before moving to Maryland and joining Montgomery County DHHS.

Becky has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and a master's degree in Public Health, and said she has been dedicated to the health of moms and babies for as long as she can remember.

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