



# The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup>

HEALTHY PREGNANCIES  
& SECURE FAMILIES

## The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup>

INTEGRATING PRENATAL CARE AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES

All pregnant women and their families need support to have a healthy pregnancy and prepare for their growing family. Depression, anxiety, and harmful substance use are common issues that can contribute to poor pregnancy outcomes.

The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup> integrates behavioral health screening and services, care coordination, and navigation to community resources into prenatal and postpartum care to keep moms and babies healthy and families together.

The initiative was founded on evidence that a team-based, non-judgmental, and culturally responsive model of care improves outcomes for moms, children, and families. When health providers have the tools and staffing they need to provide whole-person care for their pregnant patients, they can improve health outcomes for mothers and babies and help Montana families thrive.

## The Meadowlark Model of Care

Participation in The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup> supports prenatal care clinics in implementing a new model of care tailored to meet each community's needs and available resources. The Meadowlark model of care integrates behavioral health into prenatal and postpartum care and coordinates patient care and community resources for patients and families.

- All patients are universally screened for anxiety, depression, substance use, and needs related to the social determinants of health.
- If a patient has a positive screen or requests additional support, a behavioral health provider is available to meet, assess the issue, and initiate any needed treatment, generally during the same visit.
- If any social needs are identified - like access to safe housing, affordable food, or reliable transportation - the care coordinator will work with trusted local and state organizations to navigate each patient to available resources.
- When concerns that might impact the health and safety of the mom or newborn are identified, care coordinators use the Meadowlark Family Plan of Safe Care<sup>1</sup> to keep patients and families engaged in care and create a collaborative plan to address those issues.

## Benefits of the Meadowlark Model of Care

Organizations participating in The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup> have shown what a powerful difference they can make for Montana families. A recent evaluation<sup>2</sup> of the initiative showed that Meadowlark sites have:

- A higher-than-average percentage of women receiving adequate prenatal care
- A lower-than-average percentage of premature births
- A decrease in infant removals
- An increase in universal screening for depression and substance use disorders

## How We Help

The Montana Healthcare Foundation provides grant funding and technical assistance for prenatal care clinics to develop an integrated, comprehensive program for pregnant women and families so their physical, mental, and social health needs can be met in one place. The Meadowlark model of care emphasizes a culture of care and trust that supports the best outcomes for moms and their babies.

Funding to join The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup> is available to at least one prenatal practice in each Montana community with a hospital that delivers babies. Prenatal care providers who see Medicaid patients, including family practitioners, obstetricians, midwives, and rural hospitals, are encouraged to apply.

Use the QR code to learn more about The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup>.

If you are interested in participating in the initiative, please contact our office at [info@mthf.org](mailto:info@mthf.org).

All grant applications are by invitation only.

The Meadowlark Initiative<sup>®</sup> is funded and supported through a partnership between the Montana Healthcare Foundation and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

<sup>1</sup> <https://mthf.org/wp-content/uploads/Meadowlark-FPOSC-Guide.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://mthf.org/resource/the-meadowlark-initiative-evaluation/>

