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What's Included In This Edition:

Schwimmer Script - Raising the Bar for Maternal Health: A Community-Centered Approach in New Jersey

Take Five Interview - Alexandra Nelson, DNP, RN, FACHE, Capital Health & Kelly LaMonica, DNP, Penn Medicine Princeton Health

Register for Perinatal Mental Health First Aid Training on 8/21

The MAP Forward: Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity on 9/10

Health Care Connections in the Capital: Open House on 9/18

Where Communication Meets Care: Key Takeaways From Our Recent Event - *Transforming Communication in Maternal Health Care and Health Systems*

What We're Listening To

A graphic for the 'Schwimmer Script' section. It features a circular portrait of Linda Schwimmer, a woman with dark curly hair, smiling. To the right of the photo, the text 'Schwimmer Script' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below this, 'Linda Schwimmer, JD' is written in a smaller blue font, followed by 'President & CEO,' and the Quality Institute logo. A stylized pen icon is positioned to the right of the text.

Raising the Bar for Maternal Health: A Community-Centered Approach in New Jersey

In this newsletter, we spotlight *Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence*, a community-focused initiative led by the Quality Institute in New Jersey. Our Take Five features two hospital leaders — Alexandra Nelson of [Capital Health](#) and Kelly LaMonica of [Penn Medicine Princeton Health](#) — who are deeply engaged in this work, with strong support from their health systems. Please read their interviews below.

When the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation invited us to pilot [Raising the Bar in New Jersey](#), we focused on two hospitals in Greater Mercer County to create regional impact. The initiative recognizes hospitals not only as health care providers, but also as employers, anchor institutions, and trusted community partners. Capital Health and Penn Medicine set aside any competitive concerns to collaborate on a common goal: ensuring that every person giving birth — regardless of race, ethnicity, or

income — has the best possible experience and outcomes.

To pilot Raising the Bar in New Jersey, we focused on three core interventions:

Hospital Benchmarking Survey

To assess current strengths and areas for growth, our team conducted in-person interviews with hospital executives, frontline workers, maternal health clinicians, and former patients. We evaluated data on access, outcomes, quality, and patient experience; reviewed relevant policies; and facilitated a comprehensive self-assessment. Areas examined included clinical training, response to labor and postpartum emergencies, and support available for mental health and addiction. Data collection occurred in early 2024 and has been presented to the hospitals. The Benchmarking Survey tools we created are helping to guide the hospitals in their efforts throughout the pilot and beyond it...

[Read Full Story](#)

TAKE FIVE INTERVIEW

Alexandra Nelson, DNP, RN, FACHE,
Service Line Director, Maternal & Infant Health, Capital Health

Kelly LaMonica, DNP,
Labor & Delivery Nurse Manager, Penn Medicine Princeton Health



NEW JERSEY HEALTH CARE
QUALITY INSTITUTE

Interviews with members, influencers, and noteworthy people

Alexandra Nelson, DNP, RN, FACHE, Service Line Director, Maternal & Infant Health, [Capital Health](#), a member of the Quality Institute's Provider Council System Level.

Kelly LaMonica, DNP, Labor and Delivery Nurse Manager at [Penn Medicine Princeton Health](#), a member of the Quality Institute's Provider Council.

Interview Sneak Peek: What motivated your hospital to join the [Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence](#) initiative?

Nelson: Raising the Bar looks to address a critical issue in the community we serve and aligns with so much of our work that it was a natural fit for us. As a partner in First Lady Tammy Murphy's [Nurture NJ](#) initiative, we have many things in development to help improve birth equity and maternal child outcomes for the people giving birth in our community. The Raising the Bar pilot is an important part of that. We recognize the importance of community involvement in these efforts and the value of patient voices, so the creation of the PCAB and launch of Team Birth were big draws for us.

LaMonica: I heard someone from [Ariadne Labs](#) talk at a conference about [TeamBirth](#) and later I learned we could bring TeamBirth here as part of Raising the Bar. We learned more about all aspects of Raising the Bar and thought the entire initiative could have a powerful impact in our community.

[Read Full Interview](#)




PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

The Quality Institute is offering a virtual Perinatal Mental Health First Aid Training on **Thursday, August 21, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** This training is designed for individuals who serve pregnant and postpartum patients, including doulas, nurses, family support workers, home visitors, community health workers, and other health care professionals. Learn how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health challenges during the perinatal period. Email Armonie Pierre-Jacques at apierrejacques@njhcqi.org to register today.

[Register Now](#)

MATERNITY ACTION PLAN

THE MAP FORWARD: RAISING THE BAR FOR MATERNAL HEALTH EQUITY
THE CONFERENCE CENTER AT MERCER COUNTY COLLEGE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 8:00 am. to 3:30 p.m.



#MAP4NJ

Join us for ***The MAP Forward: Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity***, on **Wednesday, September 10, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** at **Mercer County College** for a full-day convening part of our **Maternity Action Plan (MAP)** initiative. The MAP provides actionable steps, examples, and resources to stakeholders who want to take action and drive change together. We will also spotlight ***Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity & Excellence (RTB)***, a framework for health care systems. Participants will join interactive breakout rooms and hear from keynote speaker Iris Jones, Executive Director of the Office of Women's Health at the **New Jersey Department of Health**.

[Register Today](#)

HEALTH CARE CONNECTIONS IN THE CAPITAL: OPEN HOUSE ON SEPTEMBER 18TH



Join the Quality Institute, **Taft Communications, a division of RF Binder**, and **Trenton Health Team** for a special event at our new offices at 35 Clark Street, Trenton, New Jersey, on **Thursday, September 18, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.** Come mingle with local leaders and health care decision-makers, tour our beautiful new space, and enjoy light refreshments—remarks by special guest Amber Randolph, Associate Vice President, **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**. On-site and valet parking will be available. This event is by invitation only.

[Register Here](#)



EVENT RECAP: TRANSFORMING COMMUNICATION IN MATERNAL HEALTH CARE & HEALTH SYSTEMS

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the [Transforming Communication in Maternal Health Care and Health Systems](#) convening on July 29. Through interactive discussions, huddle simulations, and breakout sessions, participants explored ways to enhance team communication, learn from shared decision-making implementers across New Jersey, and connect with clinical and community partners dedicated to advancing maternal and infant health.

We extend special thanks to the [New Jersey Department of Health](#) and [Ariadne Labs](#) for their partnership in advancing TeamBirth NJ, as well as to our speakers for sharing their expertise.



WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO



["Alarming Shifts in U.S. Vaccine Policy – And What We Can Do About It,"](#) *The Princeton Pulse Podcast*: In this episode, host Heather Howard, JD, discusses recent federal vaccine policy developments alongside Dr. Céline Gounder, an infectious disease specialist and epidemiologist, and Jason Schwartz, an associate professor at the [Yale School of Public Health](#). They examine trends in vaccination rates, increasing disease vulnerability, and the need to rebuild public trust in science and public health through transparency and effective communication.



For information on how to join, please contact Virginia Tesser at vtesser@njhcqi.org.

To learn more about our current initiatives, please visit our website at www.njhcqi.org.

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