



PRESS RELEASE

Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIRGINIA NEONATAL PERINATAL COLLABORATIVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH URBAN BABY BEGINNINGS AWARDED A \$7.5 MILLION DOLLAR GRANT

A community-based model of care focused on improving maternal and infant health outcomes to be developed using Maternal Health HUBS

Richmond, Virginia – The Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC), the statewide perinatal quality collaborative (PQC) focused on improving health systems through quality improvement projects and collective impact, in partnership with Urban Baby Beginnings (UBB), a community-based maternal health hub designed to support birthing and postpartum families regardless of their income level, has been awarded a \$7.5 million dollar grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) State Maternal Health Innovation Program grant. The aim of the Maternal Health Innovation Program is to enhance maternal health across the nation by fostering collaboration among diverse fields, gathering and analyzing comprehensive maternal health data, and driving innovation in maternal health services.

The five-year project, in partnership with Urban Baby Beginnings (UBB), represents a concentrated focus to bring these systems together to support a new vision which includes strengthening collaborative systems using community-led solutions, data, & evidence-based practices to drive better perinatal & infant health outcomes. Additionally, this funding will support the expansion of four existing UBB maternal health hubs and the launch of a new UBB hub in Southwest, Virginia.

“Working collaboratively with partners within the community to identify and understand the barriers and challenges impacting maternal and infant health, will afford health systems and communities the opportunity to implement strategies that will affect behavioral changes,

impacting system level improvements for moms and babies,” said Shannon Pursell, Executive Director for the Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative. “As we continue to collectively and intentionally work together to ensure respectful and quality care is provided to all women across the Commonwealth, through sustainable strategies and policy changes, we will make Virginia the safest state to have a baby.”

Stephanie Spencer, Founder and Executive Director of Urban Baby Beginnings states, “We are deeply honored and excited about the opportunity to lead this groundbreaking initiative. Our Maternal Health Hub, at the core of this initiative, will serve as a beacon of hope and change, uniting healthcare providers, community leaders, and mothers in a shared mission. Our mission is clear: to ensure that every mother, regardless of her background or circumstances, receives the care and support she deserves during the transformative journey of motherhood. With the State Innovation Grant, we are empowered to bring innovation, collaboration, and a relentless commitment to improving maternal health to the heart of our community. Together, we will create a brighter, healthier future for mothers and their babies in Virginia.”

Disparities in maternal health outcomes persist in Virginia, particularly among minority populations. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Black and Hispanic women are two to three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications than their white counterparts. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Health reported that between 2014 and 2018, black women accounted for 34% of maternal deaths, despite representing only 19% of live births. Furthermore, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reports that perinatal mood and anxiety disorders affect approximately 15-20% of pregnant individuals. Untreated mental health conditions during pregnancy can lead to adverse birth outcomes, including preterm birth and low birth weight.

In our unwavering commitment to maternal health, the Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative, Urban Baby Beginnings, and their partners embark on this transformative journey with a shared vision of healthier, more equitable outcomes for mothers and families. Our collective impact will affect generations to come.

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ABOUT US

The Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative (VNPC) emerges as a pioneering force in healthcare, dedicated to driving comprehensive advancements in maternal and neonatal care throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Focused on five critical areas, VNPC collaborates closely with healthcare institutions to implement evidence-based practices and elevate care

standards. Advocating for systemic changes that enhance maternal and neonatal health outcomes, the organization demonstrates an unwavering commitment to reducing disparities and improving access to care. With a profound dedication to maternal and infant well-being, VNPC passionately promotes healthy pregnancies, births and through the first year of life for both mom and baby across Virginia. Through continuous quality improvement initiatives and the power of collective impact, VNPC stands at the forefront, leading the way to ensure that every mother has the best possible perinatal care and every infant cared for in Virginia has the best possible start to life.

To learn more, visit Virginia Neonatal Perinatal Collaborative at <https://govnpc.org/>

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Urban Baby Beginnings (UBB), based in Richmond, Virginia, operates as a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our core mission revolves around mitigating adverse outcomes and alleviating the sense of isolation that often plagues families throughout the prenatal, postpartum, and early childhood phases. UBB achieves this mission by enhancing access to maternal health hubs, which serve as vital community resources, bolster workforce development, and advocate on behalf of birthing and postpartum families. This steadfast commitment has propelled UBB to broaden its range of programs, ensuring that families, regardless of their financial circumstances, can rely on a network of trusted community members, including perinatal health workers, doulas, home visitors, and more. UBB's hubs are currently located in Petersburg, Richmond, Norfolk, and Newport News. To learn more, visit Urban Baby Beginnings at <https://urbanbabybeginnings.org/>

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SOURCE Urban Baby Beginnings