

LAQSHYA-MANYATA: MAHARASHTRA'S QUALITY CARE CERTIFICATION FOR PRIVATE MATERNITY PROVIDERS

An initiative aimed at improving quality of private maternity care in the state

Many would assume that mothers dying in India during childbirth is a result of complications that are difficult to manage. But the truth is, these deaths are mostly preventable.

In the state of Maharashtra, despite the increase in the number of women delivering in facilities, maternal mortality still remains a top priority for the state government. Considerable efforts made towards improving the quality of institutional care during the antenatal, delivery, and postpartum periods in the state. However, initiatives undertaken have mostly been limited to the public sector. This has been the case despite the fact that private providers offer upto one third of maternity care in the state. Having no specified standards for this sector, commonly results in the non-adherence to evidence-based, quality standards during child birth – risking the lives of mothers and newborns.

LAQSHYA-MANYATA: IMPROVING QUALITY OF MATERNITY AND NEWBORN CARE SERVICES IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

To address this challenge, **FOGSI (Federation of Obstetricians and Gynaecological Societies of India)**, a professional association of 35,000 obgyns, have joined hands with the **Government of Maharashtra** to improve and benchmark quality of care for private providers who cater to women in low and middle-income areas. Named 'Laqshya-Manyata', this initiative is being supported by *MSD for Mothers* and MacArthur Foundation as funding partners and Jhpiego, as a technical assistance partner. This program is an extension of the national initiative – Manyata led by FOGSI since 2013.

This program recognizes private maternity providers who offer quality maternity care thereby, ensuring consistent, safe and respectful care for mothers during and after childbirth. The standards defined under the initiative are in line with the national government's LaQshya and World Health Organization (WHO) standard guidelines.

As part of the program, providers and their nursing staff will be able to build their skills and competencies by participating in drills, on-site mentoring and learn to develop and use standardized data collection tools so they can track the quality journey. The registered ones will be trained on clinical, essential patient care, safety and facility improvement components based on set of 26 quality standards. These standards have been carefully identified by renowned technical experts from state government, private sector obgyn specialists and partners covering components that are vital for delivering quality maternal care. These trainings will be flexible, use a blended learning approach and will be customizable to meet the providers' needs. If a facility adheres to 85% of the defined 16 clinical standards and 65% of 10 facility standards, they qualify for the LaQshya-Manyata certification.

The providers may choose to also receive additional training that prepares them to apply for accreditation to become eligible for any payor reimbursement. These opportunities are important for private providers –as per a study, almost 70 percent of private maternity providers indicated motivation to offer quality care when offered higher third-party incentives and accreditation^[1].

One of the key initiatives of the program is to transition from paper-based model to digitized processes. This will enable the program to build extensive databases which is critical to evidence generation. Further, acknowledging lack of access as one of the key challenges to transfer knowledge, the program has collaborated with a digital blended learning

^[1] GfK. 2017 The value of segmentation: Market research among private maternity providers in India.

platform –Project ECHO. Through case-based learning modalities, facilitated by ECHO, the program aims to build the capacity of private maternal care facilities at the grassroots level.

ABOUT THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

The National Health Mission, Government of Maharashtra and FOGSI will be jointly executing the following roles:

1. **Defining technical and operational components:** They will constitute the technical and operational committees having adequate representation from both the parties, identify technical support development partner/s, subject matter experts and other relevant stakeholders to develop, review and finalize operational guidelines, technical learning resource packages, and required checklists/resources before the rollout of the initiative. Both the parties will also review and endorse the program support structures and mechanisms including web platform.
2. **Facility engagement:** They will officially endorse and actively promote engagement and onboarding of private sector maternity setups on existing platform and ensure adequate engagement of state/regional/district level administrative units/societies. They will ensure communication and follow up with relevant district health authorities/societies for identification of dedicated nodal persons and trainers under the program
3. **Creating program support structures and review mechanisms:** They will:
 - Identify and nominate state/regional/district level nodal officials for effective and efficient operationalization support structures for the program
 - Create/provide access to required program support structures to take up quality improvement activities at district level
 - Undertake required state/regional/district level program reviews with relevant stakeholders
 - Provide access to available and allowable data as a strategic input in the program design and implementation
4. **Developing functional quality assurance model:** They will jointly develop and endorse joint certification mechanism with functional audit, surveillance and review mechanisms on agreeable terms/mechanisms. This will include identification, nomination, training and empanelment of adequate number of assessors from the pool of FOGSI members/Govt officials. They will develop assessor allocation and certification management system. Both the parties will strive to explore, develop and implement mechanisms for continuous quality improvement support activities for facilities beyond certification

VALUE OF THE PROGRAM

LaQshya-Manyata is a giant leap forward in advancing maternal and newborn healthcare outcomes in the state of Maharashtra. By addressing quality care in the private sector, the program complements other public sector efforts towards building a holistic health system – to reduce preventable maternal and newborn deaths.

While safety of women and newborn is at the core of the program, investing in LaQshya-Manyata creates value for other stakeholders in the maternal care ecosystem such as the private maternity providers. It enables them to build capable teams, with improved ability to manage life-threatening complications, such as obstructed labor, pre-eclampsia and/or eclampsia, and postpartum hemorrhage during and immediately after deliveries – such that every mother, no matter where she is, has access to quality care.