



# Enhancing Maternal Safety Through Standardization & Recognition of Maternal Urgent Warning Signs

Authors: Aimee Fleischman MSN RNC-ONQS IBCLC, Women's & Children's Service Line Quality Program Administrator, Melanie Martín MSN RN, Program Director for the Women & Children's Service Line, Julia Wheeling MBA, RN Program Director for the Women & Children's Service Line

WellSpan Health System, Pennsylvania

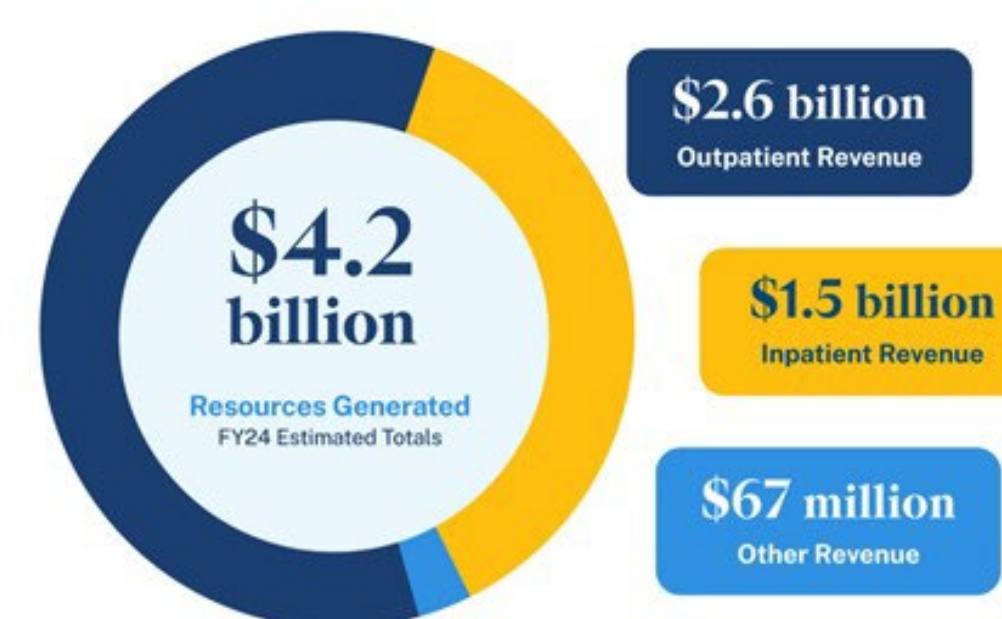
## Problem Statement

The Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health: Urgent Maternal Warning Signs (UMWS) highlight critical symptoms that may indicate life-threatening maternal complications. Timely recognition and response can prevent severe maternal morbidity or mortality in postpartum and antepartum patients. As severe maternal morbidity (SMM) rates continue to increase, education and awareness is a critical component in counteracting this concerning trend.

## Focus Areas & Measures

1. To share education and awareness of Urgent Maternal Warning Signs across WellSpan Health System.
2. Educate patients and healthcare providers on key maternal health topics and best practices.
3. Empower pregnant and postpartum individuals to advocate confidently for their own health and well-being.
4. Implement strategies aimed at reducing preventable deaths related to recognized warning signs in maternal care

## About WellSpan



- 23,000 team members
- 3,050 providers
- 220 Patient Care Locations
- \$400 million in community benefit
- Top 20% Credit Rating: AA-(stable)/Aa3 (stable)

## Key Interventions

The WellSpan Health Team standardized patient and staff education using the UMWS infographic to improve recognition across the perinatal care journey.

The UMWS infographic was placed in system pregnancy education resources to include prenatal intake education, pregnancy app, childbirth education classes.

AIM infographic utilized in prenatal teaching, Pregnancy & Postpartum App, Childbirth Classes and hospital discharge. This infographic will be standard and recognizable to patients across pregnancy and postpartum journey.

OBGYN practices received laminated copies in English & Spanish to post in each exam room. Staff are encouraged to discuss UMWS at both pregnancy and postpartum visits.

Inpatient Nurses received standard UMWS Education at staff meeting to reintroduce and validate importance of RN roles in recognition and response. This education was expanded to include the Nurse Triage Call Center and Emergency Departments.

Utilized unit-based staff meetings for education, awareness and opportunity discussion.

Information shared in Preeclampsia follow up program material.

A pre/post RN education survey was completed to measure impact of the UMWS education. Nurses were asked suggestions for improving awareness or response to UMWS on their unit. Responses were shared with leadership at each birthing hospital.

All inpatient OB units provided patients with infographic in maternal primary language during discharge teaching. Teach back method was utilized to ensure patient understanding and interpreter services were utilized, when appropriate.

Supporting care for all by focusing on providing education in maternal primary language to enhance comprehension.



## Results

Nurse Pre-Education Survey Results: 22% of RNs felt confident in identifying UMWS. 88% RNs were not aware of UMWS. Post-Education Survey Results 87% feel confident in identifying UMWS.

Exam room posters in English/Spanish in over 21 OBGYN exam rooms across the health system . Available in maternal preferred primary language – available in 79 languages

## Status & Innovation

This initiative included creative methods to standardize patient education, improve recognition, facilitate staff education and provide equitable access to critical education that supports overall maternal health and maternal morbidity reduction. The projects have been completed and will assist in the sustainment of the maternal sepsis initiative.

## On this topic, our team would most like to learn from our peers....

Innovative opportunities to incorporate UMWS into Perinatal Care.

## References

1. Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health: Consensus Bundle on Sepsis in Obstetric Care. Obstetrics and Gynecology. 2023. Bauer ME, Albright C, Prabhu M, et al.
2. ACOG Practice Bulletin No. 211: Critical Care in Pregnancy. Obstetrics and Gynecology. 2019
3. Impact of a Maternal Early Warning System and Severe Hypertension Safety Bundle on Timely Treatment of Hypertensive Emergencies: A Quality Improvement and Health Equity Initiative. BJOG : An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 2025. Sims TD, Shubert L, Denning S, et al.
4. Use of Maternal Early Warning Trigger Tool Reduces Maternal Morbidity. American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 2016. Shields LE, Wiesner S, Klein C, Pelletreau B, Hedriana HL.