



## **Saint Anthony Hospital Remains as a Leader in Care for Mothers and Newborns**

Community Hospital Working to Combat Racial Disparities in Maternal Health Care

**CHICAGO** – As Illinois moves towards addressing state-wide maternal morbidity and mortality rates among women minorities, Saint Anthony Hospital, located in one of Chicago’s most challenged communities on the city’s southwest side, continues its commitment to improving care for mothers and newborns while working to find new ways to combat maternal health disparities, particularly in minority communities. From 2015 - 2018, 96 percent of maternal patients at Saint Hospital were either Hispanic or African-American.

Saint Anthony Hospital has established a culture of providing high quality care and patient-centric programs to meet the needs of expectant mothers who may face chronic illnesses such as diabetes or hypertension in addition to socio-economic issues such as housing, income, gun and gang violence and food insecurity.

“Every person deserves access to basic human rights. We need to acknowledge and confront the unconscious biases that are often overlooked,” says Michele Bucciero, MD, Clinical Director in Obstetrics and Gynecology for Saint Anthony Hospital. “All of these issues need to be addressed if the health outcomes of our mothers and newborns are truly going to improve and I am proud to be part of the effort to accomplish this.”

The Saint Anthony Hospital Maternity Center recently took a close look at all of their policies and processes to identify areas where the hospital is excelling and most importantly where the hospital can improve and take action to enact change on saving maternal and infant lives. The rigorous onsite review by The Joint Commission earned Saint Anthony Hospital re-certification in the area of Perinatal Care. Saint Anthony is the only hospital in Chicago and one of two in Illinois to receive this recognition.

“We seek to constantly improve our processes with new ground-breaking initiatives including policies that address the opioid crisis and improving postpartum access to care,” says Dr. Bucciero.

Dr. Michele Bucciero was instrumental in introducing the Improving Postpartum Access to Care (IPAC) model which is now used as a best practices model for other hospitals which are part of the [Illinois Perinatal Quality Collaborative](#). In an effort to measure and track quality performance, the hospital is a member of the [National Perinatal Information Center \(NPIC\)](#).

Other measures the hospital takes to address racial disparities is adhering to best practices and taking a team, patient-centered approach by collaborating with midwives, which is highly valued when working with high-risk pregnancy patients. Every patient in Labor and Delivery is seen by a midwife.

“We have one of the lowest C-section rates in the City of Chicago,” says Eden Takhsh, MD, the Chairman of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Chief Quality Officer for Saint Anthony Hospital. “We take the CALM approach which means Consistent Approach to Labor Management and we credit our strong midwifery group for that. They are on staff 24-7 and as a result, our maternal patients are allowed to labor and deliver with minimal intervention as long as it’s safe to do so.”

The hospital was recently rated by [BirthGuideChicago.com](#) as best hospital on Chicago’s west/southwest side for VBAC (Vaginal Birth After C-section). The hospital’s success with this unique model can also be attributed to the midwifery program.

The Saint Anthony Maternity Program also provides:

- A dedicated OB Patient-Care Navigator to help guide expecting mothers through the entire maternity process from prenatal care to post delivery.
- Health care benefits assistance
- Free prenatal classes and Maternity Center tours in English and Spanish
- Transportation assistance
- Child Safety Program with car seats installed upon discharge by certified child passenger safety technicians.
- Bilingual staff
- Partnerships with community health centers in North Lawndale, Little Village and surrounding communities

With the University of Chicago as its Perinatal Center, Saint Anthony Hospital has been able to expand on continuity of care and accessibility to specialty care for its obstetrics and pediatric service lines.

“Saint Anthony Hospital’s patients and providers have access to some of the best obstetrical specialist in the city,” said Dr. Takhsh. “This collaboration also allows these specialists to provide care locally whenever possible.”

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