Statement for the Record Regarding Medicaid 2021 Core Set of Measures
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Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance (MMHLA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization focused on advocating for maternal mental health (MMH) conditions. MMHLA’s vision is that all childbearing women in the United States will be educated about and screened for anxiety and depression during the perinatal timeframe and have access to resources for recovery.

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION SCREENING. **MMHLA applauds the WorkGroup’s recommendation to add the Postpartum Depression Screening and Follow-up Measure to the Medicaid 2021 Core Set of Health Care Quality Measures for Medicaid and CHIP.** Mental health conditions – primarily anxiety and depression – are the MOST COMMON complications of pregnancy and childbirth, affecting 1 in 5 women. Left untreated, these illnesses can have long-term negative impact on mother, baby, family, and society.

PRENATAL DEPRESSION SCREENING. **MMHLA encourages adding the Prenatal Depression Screening and Follow-up Measure to the Medicaid Core Set as soon as possible.** It is essential to identify women who are experiencing depression or other mental health disorder as soon as possible to preserve the mental health and wellbeing of both mother and baby:

- Depression during pregnancy is the strongest predictor of postpartum depression. *Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Women’s Mental Health.*
- Of women experiencing postpartum depression, approximately 1/3 enter pregnancy with symptoms, 1/3 develop symptoms during pregnancy, and the remaining 1/3 develop symptoms in the postpartum timeframe. *Wisner et al, 2012.*
- Women with untreated MMH conditions during pregnancy are more likely to have poor prenatal care and use substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. *Zhou et al, 2019; Field, 2010.*
- Infants born to mothers with untreated MMH conditions are at increased risk of pre-term labor, small gestational size, and longer stays in the NICU. *Grote et al, 2010; Field, 2010; Fittelson et al, 2017.*
- Women who live in poverty are MORE likely to experience MMH conditions but LESS likely to receive treatment. *Grote et al, 2010; Taylor, 2019.*
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, along with the United States Preventive Services Task Force, recommend that women be screened at least once during pregnancy.

MMHLA is grateful that the WorkGroup is elevating the issue of maternal mental health and look forward to assisting this process in anyway possible.