

TITLE

Obstetric Hospitalists Act as Workforce Solutions and Secondary Facilitators of VBAC Access

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BACKGROUND

- Increasing the VBAC rate was a Healthy People 2020 goal.
- National guidelines from 25 years ago stipulated that a surgical team needed to be on-site to safely support VBAC.
- Despite revisions, the "immediately available" standard continues to be a barrier to VBAC.
- Obstetric hospitalists may help to facilitate VBAC access through on-site coverage.

OBJECTIVE

- **We clarified the role of hospitalists in addressing barriers and facilitators to VBAC implementation.**

What does it take... ...to bring VBAC back?

Inner Setting: Facilitator

Hospitalists functioned primarily as a workforce solution to address provider burnout and improve patient safety, only secondarily facilitating VBAC access.

Inner Setting: Barrier

In high-volume, multi-practice units, lack of clear role definition created confusion about patient assignments, leading to underutilization of hospitalists for VBAC cases.

Outer setting: Barrier

Starting a hospitalist program facilitated VBAC access, but a set of other actions were needed, like communicating with the public about VBAC services or ensuring that outpatient clinicians consistently offered VBAC.



Materials and Methods

19

Clinicians

11

Hospitals

We used an interview guide and coding framework informed by the consolidated framework for implementation research (CFIR 2.0). We interviewed obstetricians, family practitioners, nurses, and midwives. OB Hospitalists worked at 3 sites; 4 others had alternative 24/7 staffing models. All VBAC-offering sites required immediate availability.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

- Despite current and more relaxed guidelines, hospitals that resumed VBAC services continue to have on-site requirements.
- Obstetric hospitalists facilitated VBAC access by addressing provider burnout from unsustainable on-call demands.
- Implementation success also depended on complementary actions addressing workflow clarity, public awareness, and outpatient provider commitment to VBAC

