

Building Bridges to Health Equity: Addressing Transportation and Safety Barriers in Marginalized Communities



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BACKGROUND

Residents in Pennsylvania, including Fayette County, face higher maternal mortality risks due to limited healthcare resources, including:

Transportation Barriers

- Lack of transportation limits access to healthcare services like doctor's appointments and immunizations.
- In 2024, 4,056 patient appointments were canceled, including 3,120 pediatric clinic visits, with many patients citing transportation issues as a barrier.

Car Seat Accessibility

- Lack of access to car seats poses risks to child safety.
- Families did not have appropriate car seats to safely transport children to appointments.

Hospital Commitment

- Removing barriers to healthcare access.
- Collaborating with community organizations.
- Providing essential resources to families.
- Reducing healthcare disparities and improving patient experiences.



SMARTER OBJECTIVE:

Our goal is to provide safe, infant car seats to 100 families and decrease no-show appointments and appointment cancellations related to transportation by 20% in 2025.

IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN W/ ACTIONS TAKEN

Promotion of Support Services

- The new WVU Medicine Children's Birthing Center at Uniontown Hospital will serve as a hub for promoting transportation and car seat support services.
- Information will be shared through informational sessions, brochures, and direct communication with expectant mothers and families.

Community Outreach

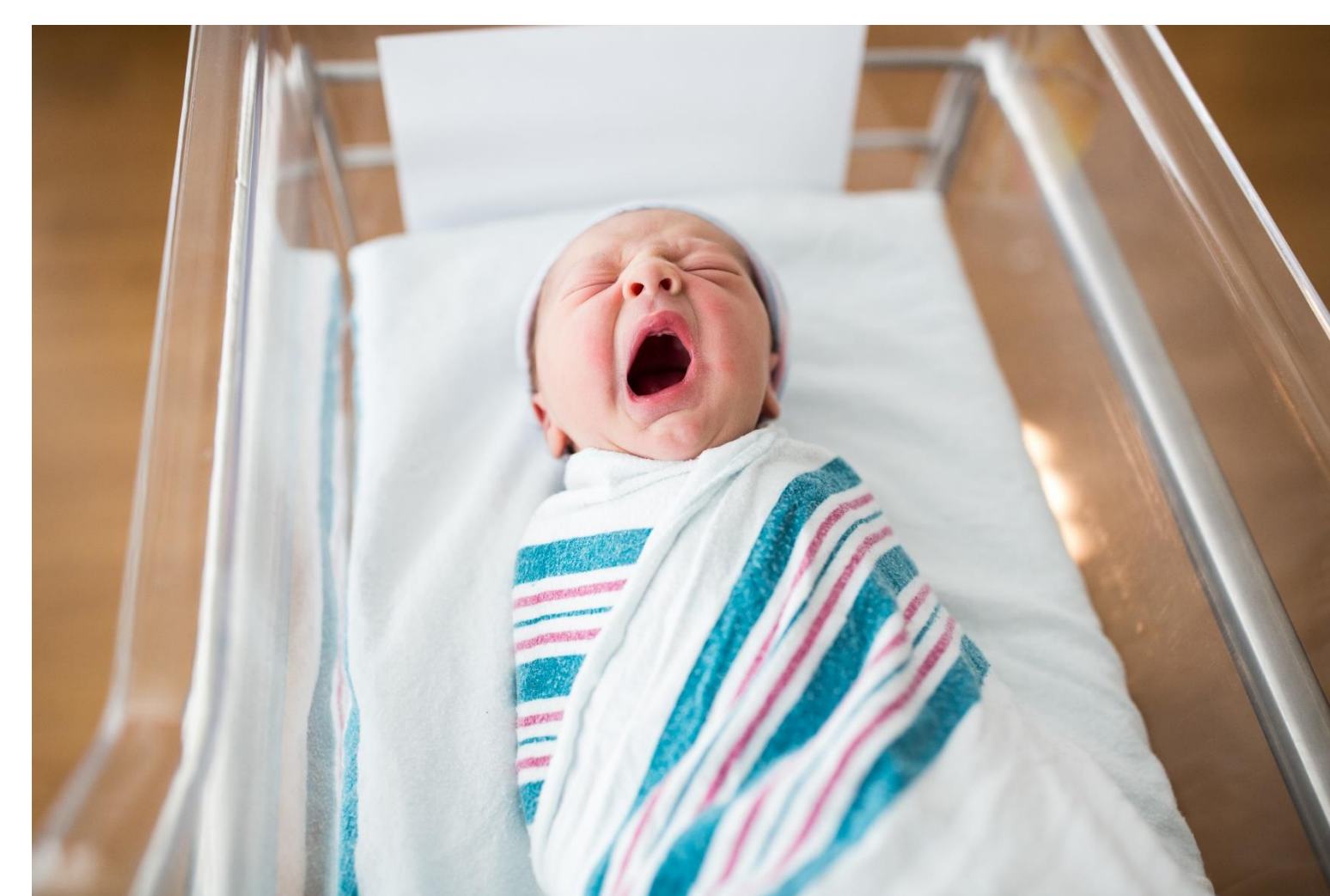
- Head Start will help spread awareness among mothers in need.
- Uniontown Hospital's primary care and specialty clinics will inform patients about available transportation and support services.

Program Evaluation

- Key metrics will track program effectiveness:
 - Number of booster seats and car seats distributed.
 - Number of transportation services provided for medical appointments.
 - Referrals facilitated by Head Start in partnership with WVU Medicine Uniontown Hospital.

Quality Assurance & Sustainability

- The Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Program ensures continuous evaluation and improvement.
- Uses structured improvement models, including the Model for Improvement and Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model.
- Led by the Quality Coordinating Committee (QCC), chaired by the Director of Quality and Patient Safety.
- Ensures long-term success and sustainability of maternal and child health initiatives.

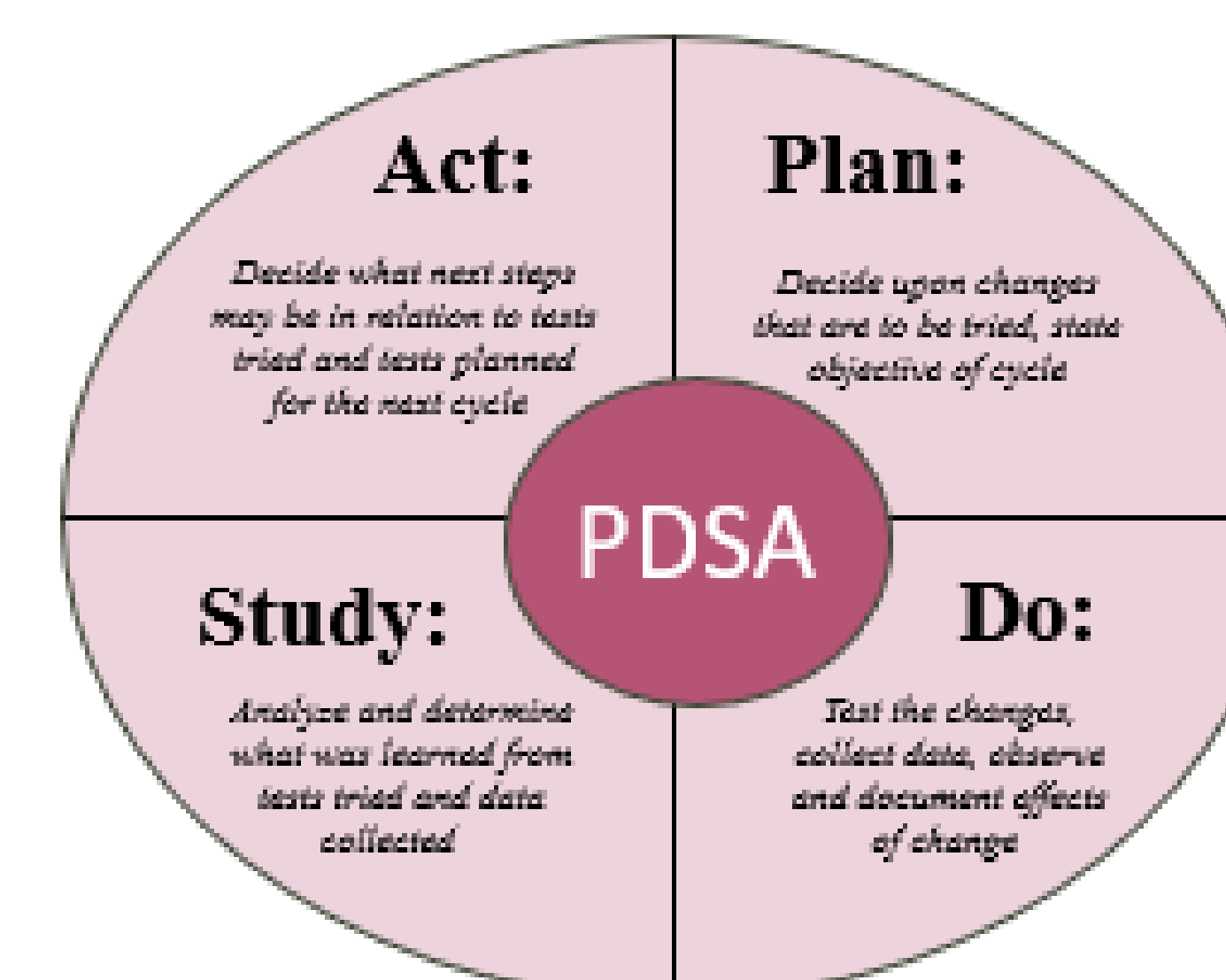
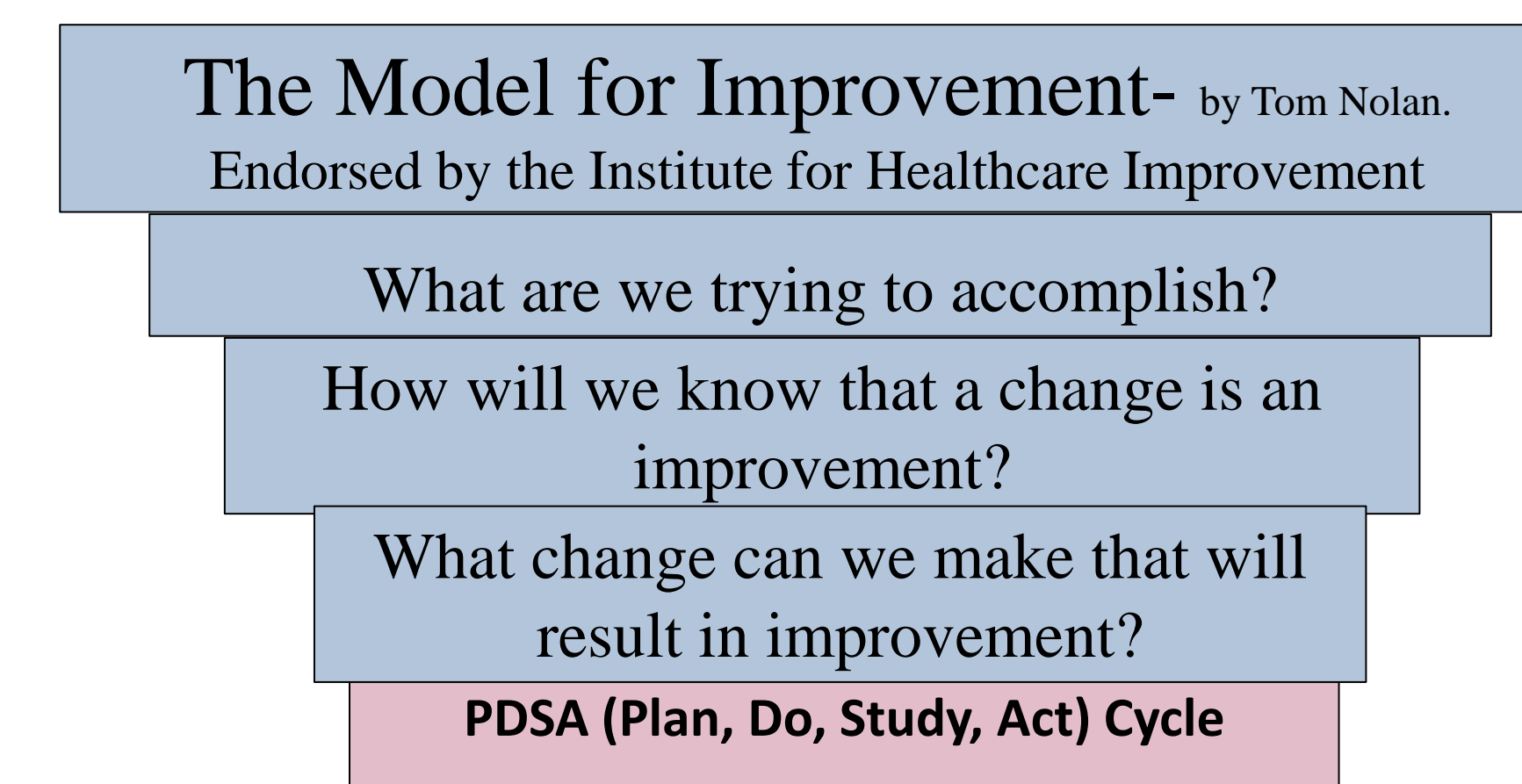


RESULTS

The baseline data from 2024 indicates that Uniontown Hospital's primary care and specialty clinics, including the pediatric clinic, are experiencing notable challenges with appointment cancellations and no-shows. Specifically:

- Overall cancellation rate: 25%
- Overall no-show rate: 7.8%
- Pediatric clinic cancellation rate: 25%
- Pediatric clinic no-show rate: 10.9%

As of February 2025, the car seat program, which launched in January, has successfully provided three infant car seats to families in need. This marks a positive early impact, and efforts to expand and support more families will continue as the program develops.



SCALE UP PLAN

Car Seat Technician Training

- Four birthing center nurses will be trained as car seat technicians, annually, and will educate families on proper car seat installation and usage.

Car Seat Safety Education

- Provided to all patients and families at the birthing center.
- Extended to the broader community through the hospital's safety fair, which also covers crib safety and injury prevention.

Future Plans

- The hospital aims to become a designated safe car seat checkpoint to ensure proper car seat installation, which reinforces the commitment to child safety and well-being in the community.

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

Sustained Partnerships

- The Birthing Center, Pediatric, and Obstetrical Clinics will continue collaborating with Head Start of Fayette County and FACT to provide essential services.

Expanded Support

- With the birthing center now open, the program now provides car seats to families, ensuring infant safety during travel.

Funding & Sustainability

- A \$50,000 Catalyst for Change grant from the Community Foundation of Fayette County funds the car seat initiative.
- Ongoing support will be maintained through volunteer services.

LESSONS LEARNED

While our community faces numerous health disparities, there are also a variety of resources and opportunities for collaboration with external agencies that can assist us in supporting the needs of our patients and families.