

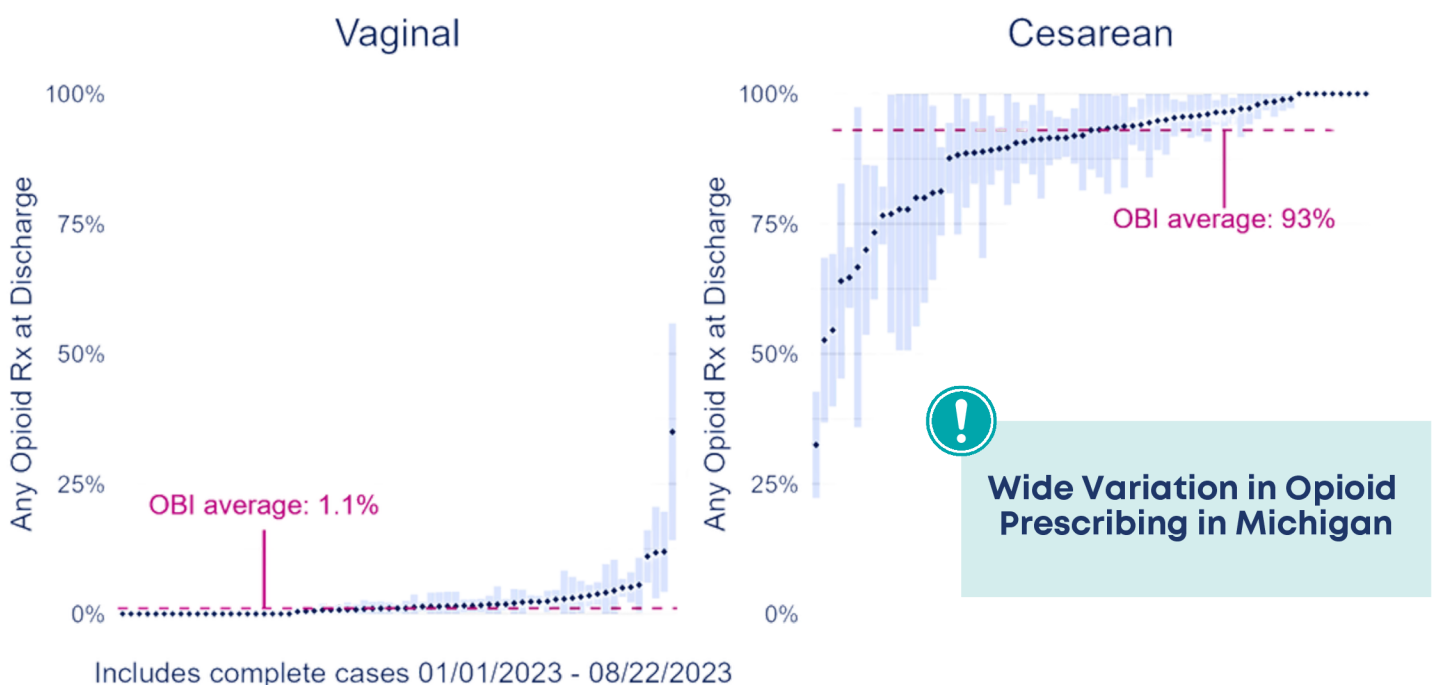
Bringing Our Patients COMFORT: Promoting Evidence-Based Pain Management After Childbirth

Helping Michigan birthing hospitals adopt new national guidelines to promote excellent postpartum pain control, reduce harmful opioid prescribing, and promote more respectful care.



THE PROBLEM

- Postpartum individuals are a critical but neglected population for opioid stewardship
- Opioid prescribing after childbirth is:
 - **Excessive**: Only 20% of prescribed opioids are consumed after cesarean
 - **Risky**: 1 in 75 people using opioids after childbirth develop new persistent opioid use
 - **Variable**: Wide variation in Michigan indicates improvement opportunity



THE SOLUTION

The Creating Optimal pain Management FOR Tailoring interventions after childbirth (COMFORT) Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG)

The COMFORT CPG aims to promote more respectful, person-centered postpartum pain management experiences through care that is both evidence-based and tailored to individual risk factors, preferences, and values.

COMFORT Recommendations*



Provide robust **education and counseling** about pain management, risks of opioid prescribing, and risk-education



Use **scheduled non-opioid medications** (acetaminophen and NSAIDs) as first-line for postpartum pain



Offer **non-pharmacologic strategies** (e.g., heat/ice, abdominal binder, aromatherapy) to augment pain management after birth



Consider **inpatient strategies**, particularly for patients with more complex postpartum pain or who are unable to receive standard treatments



Consider **tailored opioid prescribing** through a shared decision-making process



Use a **principles-based approach** to postpartum pain management for patients with opioid use disorder, chronic pain, and other complex pain

*COMFORT CPG development included a systematic literature review, a national consensus panel of 20 inter-professional experts, and input from patients and clinicians to incorporate key considerations for promoting respectful care. This CPG is meant to apply to the majority of patients, and providers should use their judgment in establishing care plans, particularly for patients with complex pain.

Bringing Our Patients COMFORT: An OBI Initiative

The Obstetrics Initiative (OBI) leads “Bringing Our Patients COMFORT,” a statewide quality improvement (QI) project to promote the adoption of the COMFORT CPG and optimize postpartum pain management.

OBI provides its 65+ member hospitals with:



Timely, credible performance data to illuminate improvement opportunities



Compelling QI resources and tailored support to overcome barriers and make change happen



Collaborative learning opportunities to inspire collective action

OBI Hospital Champions will help make clinical practice change easier with:

- COMFORT-based postpartum pain management protocols
- Electronic health record updates
- Educational resources for maternity clinicians and pregnant patients
- QI data reviews with clinical teams to inspire ongoing improvement

Initiative Goal



By December 2025, more than 70% of hospitals will offer COMFORT CPG-concordant care, measured by:

- $\geq 70\%$ of clinicians trained on COMFORT guideline
- $\geq 90\%$ of eligible births receive opioid-sparing postpartum pain management

Contact Us

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Although Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and OBI work collaboratively, the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of BCBSM or any of its employees.