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Media contact: Deydra Bringas

303-520-9591

denverhealthmedia@dhha.org

Denver Health Awarded Top Quality Improvement Honor by America's Essential Hospitals

DENVER (June 11, 2026) — America's Essential Hospitals recognized Denver Health for its Obstetrics (OB) Perinatal Addiction Recovery (OB PEAR) Program, which integrates substance use disorder screening, treatment and care coordination into routine prenatal and postpartum care to reduce maternal morbidity.

The association presented Denver Health with the 2026 Gage Award for quality improvement at a June 11 luncheon at VITAL2026, in Minneapolis.

“America's Essential Hospitals' recognition of Denver Health's PEAR program serves as powerful validation that their work is making a difference in the lives of women committed to having healthy babies. It also underscores the caliber and impact that can transform lives when care takes the whole person into consideration,” said Donna Lynne, CEO of Denver Health. “PEAR is an example for many in how putting a system in place with the right purpose and focus can drive meaningful results.”

“At Denver Health, we meet every patient exactly where they are without judgment and with unwavering compassion,” said Stefka Fabbri, MD, chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Denver Health. “Pregnancy can be a vulnerable time, especially for people navigating substance use or other complex challenges. Our OB PEAR team walks alongside patients through every step, supporting them in giving birth to a healthy baby while honoring their dignity, their goals and their lived experiences. This recognition affirms what our community already knows: Denver Health is a trusted partner for those who need us most.”

OB PEAR's team spans more than 15 clinical departments, including Obstetrics and Gynecology, Labor and Delivery, Postpartum Care, Social Work, Pharmacy and Behavioral Health. Peer recovery coaches from Operation CARE by HardBeauty hear patients' perspectives, particularly on birthing experiences and child protective services processes, to inform program design. Harm reduction efforts have identified 136 at-risk patients and distributed 174 naloxone kits. From May 2024 to August 2025, use of the validated 5Ps Prenatal Substance Abuse Screening Tool, a tool designed by the



Institute for Health and Recovery to detect substance use in pregnant individuals, has exceeded 96%, with no disparities by race, ethnicity or payer.

America's Essential Hospitals represents more than 400 hospitals dedicated to high-quality care for all, including those who face social and financial barriers to care. The Gage Awards, named after association founder Larry Gage, honor and share successful and creative member hospital programs that improve patient care and meet community needs. The Gage Award for quality improvement recognizes activities that improve the quality of care or that mitigate threats to patient safety.

“Our essential hospitals continuously innovate to build health care for the future and meet the needs of their communities,” said Jennifer DeCubellis, MA, president and CEO of America's Essential Hospitals. “The Gage Awards not only honor these mission commitments and problem-solving but also help us spread what works so all communities benefit.”

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About Denver Health

[Denver Health](#) is a comprehensive health and hospital system that provides high-quality care and proudly serves as the city's safety-net hospital. For more than 165 years, Denver Health has been guided by its mission to serve the people of Denver, to educate the next generation of healthcare professionals and to engage in research and community partnerships to better deliver the services that meet our patients' healthcare needs while strengthening our community.