

## Capstone for Impact Submission | GY2020

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**Project Title:** Assessing and Understanding Obstetric Healthcare in Prison: A Path to Improve Care for a Marginalized Population

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**Advisor Names(s):** Deborah Landis Lewis

**Branch:** Procedures Based Care

**Path of Excellence:** Scholarship of Learning and Teaching

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**Summary:** The purpose of our project is to characterize experience of nurses in managing obstetric complaints in a female prison and identify strategies to improve care. With the increase in the population of incarcerated women, of whom an estimated 4% are pregnant on entry, timely and appropriate care depends on prison nurses' confidence and ability to identify higher level obstetric needs and triage patients. We aim to identify current comfortability and skill in treating pregnant persons at a local women's prison, and where possible implement interventions to enhanced care.

**Methodology:** Interviews were conducted with the Health Unit Manager and nursing staff at the prison. A Likert Scale survey (1 = not at all comfortable to 5 = very comfortable) was given to this pilot population of prison staff to assess comfortability with treating pregnant prisoners. Additional questions assessed current workflow, training provided, and access to reference materials.

**Results:** Nursing staff and nursing management rated comfortability of treating pregnant patients as 2/5 and 4/5, respectively. Interviews identified one obstetrician/gynecologist who staffs the prison Monday through Thursday. All other times, nurses staff the clinic without a physician. Pregnant persons are transferred to a local hospital for emergencies and birth. These interviews suggest a knowledge gap in obstetric care among prison nurses; the root cause may be attributed to lack of training and access to materials.

**Conclusion:** We have identified an opportunity to enhance nursing obstetric knowledge and thereby improve care for this vulnerable population. Next steps include survey distribution to all prison nurses and, based on these results, implementation of an appropriate intervention using the Plan-Do-Study-Act approach.

**Reflection/Impact Statement:** As medical students, this quality improvement project has enabled us to better understand and directly impact the carceral healthcare system. The process of conducting this project challenged my predisposed notion that as medical students we are incapable of driving change in a healthcare setting.