



State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



GAVIN NEWSOM
GOVERNOR

April 30, 2021

Dear NICU Medical Director,

We write to update you on California Children's Services' (CCS) plans regarding the collection of data elements describing lower acuity inborn NICU admissions (LAINAs) – inborn patients who do not meet California Perinatal Quality Care Collaborative (CPQCC) high illness acuity criteria.

CCS has collaborated with the California Association of Neonatologists (CAN) and the CPQCC to affirm the beneficial aims of this effort and to confirm that the necessary data management infrastructure is in place. Close to 60 NICUs already report to CPQCC an "All NICU Admits" dataset, which includes the LAINA subgroup. The Focusboard feature on the CPQCC Reports website now offers graphical and tabular displays produced from those data, with much new and useful insight. CPQCC has advised CCS that by 2022 they will be prepared for all CCS approved NICUs to collect and report their LAINA data, and CPQCC will start reporting aggregated data to CCS in the summer of 2023. Therefore, CCS requests that effective January 1, 2022, all CCS approved NICUs will be required to report the following three data elements in addition to the existing five on the NICU Activity Log of the CCS Supplemental Form:

1. NICU admission date
2. Does this baby meet CPQCC high illness acuity criteria? (Yes/No)
3. "Main problem(s) at discharge" (up to three), for each LAINA. Note that choices will appear in a drop-down list reflecting survey results from NICU medical directors. CPQCC is exploring the possibility of automated retrieval of coded discharge diagnoses that NICUs already routinely report elsewhere.

As a reminder, here are the five data elements NICUs have routinely been reporting on their NICU Activity Log of the CCS Supplemental Form:

1. Unique patient identifier
2. Birth date
3. Birth weight
4. Gestational age

5. NICU discharge date

Statewide, 88% of inborn NICU admissions at 34 weeks' gestation or greater, and 70% of all inborn NICU admissions, are *not* characterized by high illness acuity. That is, these are LAINAs. Our ability to provide a structured overview of this large portion of the NICU service population promises to contribute importantly in our continuing efforts to optimize care for the babies we serve.

Sincerely,

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