



National Preterm  
Birth Prevention  
COLLABORATIVE

update

ISSUE 1 | AUGUST 2022

## Every Week Counts: National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative

Being born too early remains the leading cause of death and disability in children up to five years of age in the developed world. Preventing this major complication of pregnancy and its far reaching impacts needs to be one of our highest priorities in healthcare.

A new National Collaborative aimed at supporting Australian hospitals to deliver evidence-based changes in clinical care is seeking to do just this and is set to significantly reduce rates of preterm birth to improve health outcomes for mothers and their babies.

### The Project

The "Every Week Counts": National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative is a two-year initiative aiming to safely lower the rate of preterm and early term birth within participating maternity units from across Australia and leave an enduring culture of better practice.

In recent years, the rate of preterm birth has been rising dramatically in many countries, including ours. Across our population more than 8% of births are too early, and in First Nation Australians the rate is almost double.

Australia's national program to safely lower the rate of preterm birth began with a state-wide program launched in Western Australia in 2014. Encouraging success has also been shown using the same approach in Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory .

To support efforts to accelerate this work nationally, the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance (the Alliance) has partnered with Women's Healthcare Australasia (WHA), the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and Safer Care Victoria in this two year collaborative improvement program that aims to reduce preterm and early term birth across Australia by 20%.

### The Breakthrough Collaborative Approach

The IHI Breakthrough Collaborative Model was designed to help organisations close the gap between what we know and what we do. The Model has been used successfully to dramatically improve health outcomes within regions and countries around the world for over 25 years. The Every Week Counts: National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative utilises this approach to enable achievement of the ambitious aim set by the Alliance.

During the Collaborative, participating hospital teams will be supported to accelerate their

learning and develop reliable systems to ensure all women are offered the care and public health information that is known to reduce early birth. Teams will also be able to share their learnings with each other across Australia. [Click here to learn more about the key elements of the National Collaborative.](#)

## Our Affiliates

Funded by the Commonwealth Government, the Every Week Counts Collaborative is a key part of the world's first national preterm birth prevention program and is being undertaken in partnership with many other associations, societies and Colleges active in related fields.

These include the Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth, the Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand, the professional Colleges for obstetricians, midwives and other health professionals, research institutes, health departments and our consumer representatives.

Together, we are a national force aiming to strategically lower the rate of preterm birth.



### Midwifery Continuity of Care

Receiving care throughout pregnancy by a midwife who is known to a mother-to-be is referred to as a midwifery continuity of care model. This method of healthcare service is one of the best public health strategies available to prevent preterm birth. Read more about the importance of midwifery continuity of care here:

[Learn more](#)

### Partnering with Consumers

The Every Week Counts: National Preterm Birth Prevention Collaborative strongly believes in the power of partnering with healthcare consumers to work together to help reduce the rate of preterm birth in Australia. Read more about the importance of consumer advocacy and representation to the National Collaborative here:

[Learn more](#)





## Lived experiences of preterm birth

Personal stories of preterm birth, as told first-hand by families of premie babies, are key to our efforts to prevent preterm birth. Mothers and fathers who bravely tell their powerful stories of joy and heartbreak will help to motivate the changes needed to reduce the chances that other families go through what they had to. See the true face of our work here:

**Learn more**



The Every Week Counts National Collaborative is a joint collaboration between the Australian Preterm Birth Prevention Alliance, Women's Healthcare Australasia (WHA), the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and Safer Care Victoria, which is being funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Women's & Infants Research Foundation.

Partner organisations include Women's and Babies Research, Every Week Counts, Centre of Research Excellence in Stillbirth, Perinatal Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Australian College of Midwives.

For further information please contact Women's Healthcare Australasia

