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VCHA CenteringPregnancy Implementation Opportunity Program Information & Application Guide

A VCHA-Sponsored Opportunity to Support CHCs in Launching a Structured Group Prenatal Care Model

Issued By:
Virginia Community Healthcare Association
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Application Due Date:
August 5, 2026

# of Awardees:
Four health center clinical site locations

Program Period:
One year

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Program Overview

VCHA is launching a CenteringPregnancy® implementation opportunity to support selected Virginia community health centers in strengthening prenatal care through a structured group care model.

Through this initiative, VCHA will sponsor Centering Healthcare Institute (CHI) implementation services for up to four health center selected sites. These services are designed to help health centers prepare for, launch, and sustain CenteringPregnancy as part of their maternal health care delivery model.

This opportunity is not structured as a direct grant award. Health centers will not receive direct funding. Instead, VCHA has procured implementation services and resources through CHI for selected participating sites. The contract states that VCHA is providing funding for services for four selected sites and that services include consulting and implementation support through Centering Healthcare Institute.

About CenteringPregnancy

CenteringPregnancy is an evidence-based, relationship centered group prenatal care model that combines health assessment, interactive learning, and community building in a group setting. Patients participate in prenatal visits with others who have similar due dates, allowing them to build relationships, ask questions, and receive care in a more engaging and supportive environment.

The model is designed to support both clinical care and patient education. Sessions include one-on-one health assessments with a provider, facilitated group discussion, and activities focused on pregnancy, birth, postpartum care, infant health, self-care, and family well-being.

For health centers, CenteringPregnancy can support broader maternal health strategies, including prenatal engagement, postpartum care, behavioral health integration, care coordination, substance use support during pregnancy, and addressing non-medical factors affecting health outcomes.

Purpose of the Opportunity

The purpose of this opportunity is to help selected health centers successfully launch CenteringPregnancy by reducing the upfront cost and implementation burden that may otherwise prevent adoption of the model.

VCHA's goal is to support health centers that are prepared to implement a structured group prenatal care model and have the internal readiness needed to make the model successful.

The opportunity is intended to:

- Support implementation of CenteringPregnancy in Virginia CHCs.
- Increase access to patient-centered prenatal care models.
- Strengthen maternal health services for Medicaid, uninsured, and medically underserved patients.
- Support health centers in building sustainable group prenatal care infrastructure.
- Promote improved prenatal engagement and patient experience.
- Help participating sites build the staffing, workflow, and quality improvement processes needed to sustain CenteringPregnancy beyond initial implementation.

What Selected Sites Will Receive

Selected sites may receive:

- Annual Centering site license.
- Centering Advisor implementation support for one year.
- Support from the Centering Practice Transformation team.
- Launch Day site visit.
- Centering Facilitation Workshop seats.
- Accreditation site visit.
- Centering Leader Kit.
- Patient notebooks and implementation materials.
- Access to Centering tools, methodology, quality assurance resources, and patient/provider materials.

The contract notes that the annual license provides access to Centering branding, intellectual property, patient and provider materials, webinars, group facilitation workshops, implementation support, methodology, and quality assurance tools.

Who Should Apply

This opportunity is best suited for health centers that are ready to implement a structured group prenatal care model and have the leadership support, staffing, prenatal care volume, and operational capacity needed to be successful.

Strong applicants will likely be health centers that can demonstrate:

- Meaningful prenatal care volume.
- A clear maternal health focus.
- Leadership and provider buy-in.
- Identified staff who can participate in implementation.
- Capacity to schedule and host group prenatal care sessions.
- Appropriate space for group visits.
- Ability to support patient recruitment and retention.
- Willingness to collect and report implementation and outcome data.
- Alignment with broader maternal health priorities, such as postpartum care, behavioral health, substance use support during pregnancy, care coordination, doulas, midwifery partnerships, or addressing non-medical factors affecting health outcomes.

This opportunity may not be the right fit for a site that has very low prenatal volume, lacks dedicated staff, does not have leadership support, does not have appropriate space, or is not ready to make operational changes needed to launch group prenatal care.

Site Readiness Expectations

Applicants should be prepared to describe their readiness to implement CenteringPregnancy. Since CHI will make the final determination based on site readiness, the application should help show whether the health center is operationally prepared to participate.

Readiness expectations may include:

- Leadership support from senior leadership and clinical leadership.
- A designated internal project lead.
- Identified clinical and non-clinical staff to participate.
- Provider engagement and willingness to support group prenatal care.
- Space to host group visits.
- Ability to identify and enroll eligible prenatal patients.
- Capacity to develop group schedules.
- Ability to participate in implementation calls, workshops, and site visits.
- Willingness to participate in accreditation and annual reporting.

Health centers should also be prepared to describe how CenteringPregnancy fits within their maternal health strategy and how they plan to sustain the model after the initial implementation period.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants should be a Virginia health center that provides prenatal care and serves patients who may benefit from a group prenatal care model. Applicants must be located within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The agreement specifies that all participating sites must be within Virginia.

Eligible applicants should be able to demonstrate:

- Current prenatal care services.
- Interest in launching CenteringPregnancy.
- Organizational readiness.
- Staffing capacity.
- Operational ability to host group prenatal care.
- Commitment to implementation and sustainability.
- Ability to participate in data collection and reporting.

Selected Site Responsibilities

Selected sites will be expected to actively participate in the implementation process and commit the staff time and operational support needed to launch CenteringPregnancy successfully.

Selected sites may be responsible for:

- Assigning a site lead.
- Identifying staff to participate in facilitation preparation.
- Participating in implementation planning with CHI.
- Attending required workshops, meetings, and site visits.
- Developing workflows for group prenatal care.
- Recruiting and enrolling patients.
- Maintaining a group visit schedule.
- Providing appropriate space for sessions.
- Supporting internal communication and staff buy-in.
- Collecting and submitting required data.
- Participating in accreditation activities.
- Planning for long-term sustainability after the initial implementation period.

Selected sites should understand that this opportunity provides sponsored implementation support, but successful launch will require active engagement and ownership by the health center.

Implementation Timeline

Program Period: One Year

Selected sites will participate in a structured implementation process led by CHI, with coordination and support from VCHA. The exact timing may vary based on site readiness, scheduling, and implementation needs.

Phase 1: Site Selection and Readiness Review
Applications will be reviewed to determine organizational readiness, prenatal care volume, leadership support, staffing capacity, and ability to implement the CenteringPregnancy model.

Phase 2: Onboarding and Initial Planning
Selected sites will participate in introductory planning conversations with CHI and VCHA. Sites will identify key staff, confirm leadership support, discuss implementation goals, and begin preparing for launch.

Phase 3: Workflow and Operational Planning
Sites will work through key implementation steps, including identifying group space, developing patient recruitment plans, creating group schedules, assigning staff roles, and preparing internal workflows.

Phase 4: Facilitation Preparation
Identified staff will participate in Centering facilitation preparation to support delivery of group prenatal care.

Phase 5: Launch Preparation and Site Support
Sites will receive implementation support to prepare for group launch, including support from CHI and a Launch Day site visit.

Phase 6: Group Implementation
Sites will begin offering CenteringPregnancy groups and continue receiving implementation support as they address workflow, scheduling, patient engagement, and operational needs.

Phase 7: Accreditation and Sustainability Planning
Sites will participate in accreditation-related activities and begin planning for long-term sustainability of CenteringPregnancy within their health center.

Data Collection and Reporting Expectations

Participating sites should be prepared to collect and report basic implementation and outcome information throughout the project period.

Data collection should help VCHA and participating sites understand implementation progress, patient reach, patient engagement, and opportunities for improvement.

Potential reporting areas may include:

- Number of CenteringPregnancy groups launched.
- Number of patients enrolled.
- Number of patients completing sessions.
- Prenatal care engagement.
- Postpartum visit completion, if available.
- Patient satisfaction.
- Staff participation.
- Implementation barriers and successes.
- Sustainability planning progress.
- Maternal health outcomes that can be reasonably tracked by the health center.

Selected sites should also be prepared to participate in annual reporting requirements connected to Centering accreditation and sustainability. The contract notes that after successful completion of accreditation, sites maintain accredited status through annual reporting.

Application Review and Selection Process

Applications should be reviewed based on both need and readiness. The strongest applications will show that the health center serves a prenatal population that could benefit from CenteringPregnancy and has the internal capacity to implement the model successfully.

Recommended review criteria:

- Prenatal care volume.
- Maternal health need.
- Leadership support.
- Provider and staff readiness.
- Identified implementation team.
- Space and scheduling capacity.
- Ability to recruit and retain patients.
- Alignment with broader maternal health strategy.
- Ability to collect and report data.
- Sustainability plan.

Because this is a sponsored implementation opportunity and not a direct grant award, selection should focus less on a proposed budget and more on readiness, implementation capacity, and potential impact.

Application and Submission Requirements

Applications for the CenteringPregnancy opportunity must be submitted through SurveyMonkey by August 5, 2026.

Applicants should be prepared to provide information that demonstrates their site's readiness to implement CenteringPregnancy, including current prenatal care services, patient volume, leadership support, staffing, available space, patient recruitment plans, anticipated barriers, sustainability planning, and data reporting capacity.

As part of the application, health centers will be asked to respond to the following questions:

- Please describe your current prenatal care services, including approximate annual prenatal patient volume.
- Why is your health center interested in implementing CenteringPregnancy?
- How would CenteringPregnancy fit within your broader maternal health strategy?
- Please describe the patient population that would be served through this model.
- What maternal health challenges or needs are you hoping this model will help address?
- Does your leadership team support implementation of CenteringPregnancy? Please describe.
- Please identify the proposed site location where CenteringPregnancy would be implemented.
- Please describe the proposed implementation site, including available space, staffing, scheduling capacity, and any operational considerations.
- Who would serve as the internal project lead for this initiative?
- Please identify the proposed CenteringPregnancy implementation team, including the following roles:

Continued on next page.

Application and Submission Requirements

Executive Sponsor
A senior leader who will support implementation, help remove barriers, and ensure the model aligns with the health center's broader maternal health strategy.

Clinical Champion
A clinical leader, such as an OB provider, family medicine provider, certified nurse midwife, women's health provider, or other prenatal care provider, who will help guide clinical implementation and support provider engagement.

Site Lead / Project Lead
The primary staff person responsible for coordinating implementation activities, communicating with VCHA and Centering Healthcare Institute, tracking next steps, and keeping the internal team organized.

Billing / Operations Lead
A staff member who can support operational planning, scheduling workflows, billing considerations, documentation, and internal process alignment.

Other staffing considerations:

- What clinical and non-clinical staff would participate in implementation?
- How would your site identify, recruit, and enroll patients into CenteringPregnancy?
- What barriers do you anticipate in launching this model?
- How would your site sustain CenteringPregnancy after the initial implementation support period?
- What data is your site able to collect and report related to prenatal care, patient participation, and outcomes?
- Is there anything else VCHA and Centering Healthcare Institute should know about your site's readiness?

Applications should include a letter or statement of leadership support and any additional information that helps demonstrate the health center's ability to successfully implement and sustain the model.

Key Dates

Opportunity Released: July 15, 2026
Application Deadline: August 5, 2026

Contact Information

For questions about the VCHA CenteringPregnancy Implementation Opportunity, please contact:

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For more information about VCHA, visit:
https://vcha.org/centeringpregnancy/

Appendix A: Site Readiness Checklist

Applicants may use the checklist below to assess whether their site is ready to apply.

Leadership and Strategy

Health center leadership supports implementation.
Clinical leadership supports implementation.
CenteringPregnancy aligns with the health center's maternal health priorities.
The site is willing to make workflow changes to support group prenatal care.

Staffing

A site lead has been identified.
Clinical staff are available to participate.
Non-clinical staff are available to support implementation.
Staff can participate in workshops, planning calls, and site visits.

Operations

The site has prenatal care volume to support group visits.
The site has appropriate space for group sessions.
The site can develop a group visit schedule.
The site can recruit and enroll patients.
The site can support patient reminders and follow-up.

Data and Reporting

The site can track patient participation.
The site can report basic implementation data.
The site can support patient satisfaction collection.
The site can participate in accreditation and annual reporting.

Sustainability

The site has considered how CenteringPregnancy could be sustained after the sponsored implementation period.
The site is willing to evaluate staffing, billing, scheduling, and operational needs for long-term success.

Appendix B: Evidence and Program Rationale

CenteringPregnancy is an evidence-informed group prenatal care model that combines health assessment, interactive learning and community building. Multiple studies have associated group prenatal care with improved prenatal engagement, high patient satisfaction, and reductions in preterm birth and low birth weight, particularly when patients participate in multiple sessions. While outcomes vary across studies, the model is widely recognized as a promising strategy to strengthen prenatal care, improve patient experience, and support better maternal and infant health outcomes.

List of Studies:

Ickovics et al., 2007 — "Group Prenatal Care and Perinatal Outcomes: A Randomized Controlled Trial"
A multisite randomized controlled trial found group prenatal care was associated with improved prenatal knowledge, higher satisfaction, and lower preterm birth rates compared with standard care.

The Impact of CenteringPregnancy Group Prenatal Care on Birth Outcomes in Medicaid Eligible Women
In a Medicaid-eligible population, CenteringPregnancy group prenatal care was associated with lower risk of preterm birth, spontaneous preterm birth, low birth weight, and NICU admission compared with traditional individual prenatal care