

April, 2026

## Welcome Heather Howell



New Executive Sponsor for HOPE  
**Heather Howell, DNP, MBA, RN,  
NEA-BC, RNC-OB, CEFM**

After many years of service, Mary Lou Wilson retired from Northeast Georgia Health System in March. We are thankful for all her contributions to advancing maternal health in Georgia and beyond.

Heather Howell will serve as the new Executive Sponsor for HOPE for Georgia Moms.

### **Get to Know Heather**

Heather Howell serves as Executive Director, Women & Children's Services, and Executive Sponsor of the HOPE for Georgia Moms program. She provides strategic and operational leadership focused on advancing high-quality, patient-centered care for women, infants, and families. In her role, Heather partners closely with clinical, administrative, and executive teams to support service line performance, quality initiatives, and organizational priorities aligned with maternal and child health.

With a strong background in healthcare operations and executive support, Heather is known for her collaborative leadership style, attention to detail, and commitment to improving outcomes across the continuum of care. She brings a deep appreciation for operational excellence, stakeholder engagement, and

continuous improvement to every initiative she supports.

Heather is passionate about supporting teams that serve women and children and is dedicated to contributing to programs that strengthen maternal health and family well-being across the community.

She has professional certifications in Inpatient Obstetric (RNC-OB), Electronic Fetal Monitoring (C-EFM), and Nurse Executive, Advanced (NEA-BC).

## Medical College of Georgia Advancing Health Equity in Maternal Health Symposium

### 2026 Symposium



Members of the HOPE for Georgia Moms Task Force were proud to participate in the Medical College of Georgia's *Advancing Health Equity in Maternal Health Symposium*, a collaborative event focused on addressing maternal health disparities across Georgia. The symposium brought together clinical, public health, and community leaders to share evidence-based research, highlight innovative interventions, and strengthen interdisciplinary partnerships to improve outcomes for mothers and families.

We're especially proud of Bridgette Schulman, who represented HOPE as a presenter, alongside fellow task force members, including Dr. Marlo Vernon. Their contributions helped elevate critical conversations around equitable care, community-driven solutions, and the importance of the often-overlooked maternal health journey. Events like this reflect the power of collaboration—and

the continued momentum toward healthier outcomes and positive experiences for all Georgia moms.

## Initiative Update

**AWHONN's OPS Workshop through NGH's Center for Simulation and Innovation**

As of late 2025, HOPE for Georgia Moms has purchased **30** training seats for the OPS Workshop and **21** of those seats have already been used.

Trainings across the state in:

- North Georgia
- Metro Atlanta
- Central Georgia
- West Georgia
- Southeast and Coastal Georgia
- Out-of-state partners in the Southeast

Free trainings for providers

Learn more at [hopeforgeorgiamoms.com](http://hopeforgeorgiamoms.com)

### **AWHONN'S OPS Workshops through NGH's Center for Simulation and Innovation**

HOPE for Georgia Moms supports access to high-quality, hands-on training for the providers who care for pregnant and postpartum moms. Through this support, health care teams can attend the Obstetric Patient Safety (OPS) Workshop at no cost to them. The workshop is taught by the Northeast Georgia Health System simulation team and gives doctors, nurses and first responders the chance to practice how to recognize and respond to emergencies such as hemorrhage, cardiac arrest and sepsis.

This training aligns with the statewide Cardiac Conditions in Obstetric Care AIM Bundle, which encourages teams to communicate clearly and follow shared steps when a mom shows signs of cardiac complications. By practicing together, providers become better prepared to act quickly and confidently during emergencies, helping protect the lives of mothers in both rural and urban communities across Georgia.

**As of late 2025, HOPE for Georgia Moms has purchased 30 training seats for the OPS Workshop and 21 of those seats have already been used.**

These free training spots have supported a wide range of health care teams across Georgia and beyond.

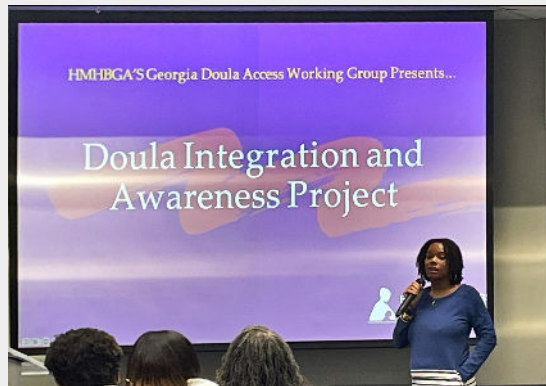
[Learn more about our initiatives](#)

## Inaugural Black Maternal Health Conference

HOPE was a proud sponsor of the the Inaugural Black Maternal Health Conference on March 21.

Hosted by Patricia Prime and It Takes a Village, this event brought together speakers, panelists, and community organizations all working toward healthier outcomes for moms and families.

It was inspiring to connect with so many passionate maternal health supports from across central Georgia and be part of the conversations focused on supporting mothers. HOPE for Georgia Moms was proud to serve as sponsor.



## Happening Now: Black Maternal Health Week

Join **Safer Births Now** for a powerful **Virtual Maternal Health Fair** this April—bringing together leading voices, critical conversations, and accessible education to advance maternal and reproductive health. Going on now through **April 11**, this free online series features over 20 sessions covering pregnancy, childbirth, parenting, and more—all led by renowned experts and thought leaders.

Attendees will gain insights from respected clinicians, advocates, and policymakers while engaging in meaningful discussions designed to inform, empower, and drive change. The experience also includes a **Birth Power Book Club** with daily virtual readings from April 6–10.

This is more than a virtual event—it's a movement to ensure safer births and stronger support for families everywhere. Explore the full lineup and register to attend at [SaferBirthsNow.com](https://SaferBirthsNow.com).



**Safer Births Now**

*Virtual*  
Maternal Health Fair

Unique Workshops Guided  
by Renowned Experts &  
Thought Leaders



[bit.ly/SaferBirths](https://bit.ly/SaferBirths)  
[SaferBirthsNow.com](https://SaferBirthsNow.com)

**Free**

**April 1st to April 11th**

Join Us for a Series of Online  
Events on Maternal and  
Reproductive Health

Participate in over 20 online  
events covering a range of topics,  
including pregnancy, childbirth,  
parenting, and more.

**Access Events Featuring**

Dr. Camille Clare  
Rep. Lauren Underwood (IL-14)  
Dr. Leslie Farrington  
Dr. Michael H. Ford, MPH  
Dr. Cassandra Henderson  
Jennie Joseph, LM, CPM  
Dr. Valencia P. Walker  
Dr. Janet A. Williams, CNM  
Shafia Monroe, MPH  
Shawnee Benton-Gibson, LMSW, FDC  
*•So many more!*

**Birth Power Book Club**

**Daily Virtual Readings: April 6-10**

[SaferBirthsNow.com/bookclub](https://SaferBirthsNow.com/bookclub)

## Safer Births Now Virtual Maternal Health Fair

### Join Motherhood Healing

Join the community in celebrating Black Maternal Health Week at the 2026 Motherhood Healing Festival—a day centered on restoration, connection, and support for mothers, families, and birth workers in rural Georgia. Held on Sunday, April 12 in Griffin, GA, this experience brings together holistic workshops, live performances, a healing circle, and a community panel, alongside tangible resources like fresh produce and pregnancy care packages. Guests will also enjoy chef-curated meals in a space designed to uplift and align.



**MOTHERHOOD  
HEALING  
FESTIVAL**

**2026**

**BLACK MATERNAL  
HEALTH WEEK!**

**SUNDAY,  
APRIL 12TH**

**HEALING AWAITS YOU:**

Holistic Workshops  
Live Performances  
Fresh Produce Giveaway  
Pregnancy Care Packages and more!

Healing Circle  
Community Panel  
Chef Curated Meals

**COME ALIGN WITH US!**

Location: Griffin, Georgia  
—because our mamas • sisters •  
birth workers living in rural GA  
deserve to be resourced too!

Visit [www.evennachristian.com](https://www.evennachristian.com) for passes  
and more info.

## GaPQC Conference-Register Now

Registration is now open for the 2026 Georgia Perinatal Quality Collaborative (GaPQC) Conference, taking place April 30–May 1 at the Emory Conference Center Hotel in Atlanta. This year's theme, *The Fourth Trimester: The Forgotten Phase*, will focus on the critical postpartum period and opportunities to improve care for mothers and families across Georgia. Space is limited—secure your spot by April 15 or before the conference sells out.

### Important details:

- **Registration ends: April 15, 2026**
- **Event date: April 30- May 1, 2026**



Registration Opens February 16th!

GEORGIA PERINATAL QUALITY COLLABORATIVE

**GaPQC**

2026 CONFERENCE  
APRIL 30 - MAY 1, 2026

EMORY CONFERENCE  
CENTER HOTEL  
1615 CLIFTON ROAD  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

THE FOURTH TRIMESTER: *THE FORGOTTEN PHASE*

REGISTRATION OPENS 2/16/26  
SPACES ARE LIMITED

CLICK [HERE](#) TO REGISTER  
OR SCAN QR CODE

REGISTRATION ENDS 4/15/26  
OR UNTIL SOLD OUT

SCAN ME

CLICK [HERE](#) TO BE ADDED TO MAILING LIST FOR FUTURE COMMUNICATION ON THIS EVENT

THE "FORGET ME NOT" FLOWER HONORS THOSE IMPACTED BY PREGNANCY AND REPRODUCTIVE  
LOSS AND RAISES AWARENESS FOR THE MILLIONS OF PEOPLE IMPACTED

## Call for Abstracts- AWHONN GA



**Now Open!**  
**2026 AWHONN Georgia  
Section Conference**

*"Hatching Hope: Nurturing Mothers, Babies,  
and the Nurses Who Guide Them"*

**Dates: August 23–25, 2026**

**Location: Jekyll Island Convention  
Center.**

[Submit Abstracts Here](#)

Conference organizers are inviting healthcare professionals to share the ideas, innovations, and connections that are helping advance maternal and newborn care. Submissions are encouraged from those who have developed new approaches, improved clinical practice, advanced research, strengthened leadership, or created meaningful progress in education and patient care.

**AWHONN membership is not required to present.**

**Important deadlines:**

- **Presentation applications:** Due **May 1, 2026**
- **Poster applications:** Due **August 1, 2026**

This is an opportunity to highlight the work you and your teams are doing to support mothers, babies, and the nurses who care for them.

## Save the Date: Annual Retreat

**Save the date for HOPE for Georgia Moms' annual Task Force Retreat.**

**Dates:** July 9-10

**Location:** Lanier Islands

**Time:** 1 p.m. start on July 9

**Register:** Click [here](#) to register for the retreat.

Hotel stays on July 8 and July 9 will be covered by HOPE if needed.

## Important Dates for 2026

**Mark your calendars with these upcoming dates for 2026.**

Date	Event	Time	Who
Jun 24, 2026 (Wed)	Quarterly Maternal Health Task Force Meeting	12–1:30 PM	Task Force
Sep 22, 2026 (Tues)	Quarterly Maternal Health Task Force Meeting	12–1:30 PM	Task Force
Dec 9, 2026 (Wed)	Quarterly Maternal Health Task Force Meeting	12–1:30 PM	Task Force
July 9-10 (Thurs–Fri)	Task Force 2-Day Retreat	In person	Task Force + Guests
April 20, 2026 (Mon)	Clinical Care Initiatives and Equitable Experiences	2-3:00 PM	Subcommittee
April 28, 2026 (Tues)	Maternal Health Data	1-2:00 PM	Subcommittee
May 1, 2026 (Fri)	Community: Advocacy, Respectful Care, and Equity	12-1:00 PM	Subcommittee
May 18, 2026 (Mon)	Clinical Care Initiatives and Equitable Experiences	2-3:00 PM	Subcommittee
May 22, 2026 (Fri)	Community: Advocacy, Respectful Care, and Equity	12-1:00 PM	Subcommittee
May 26, 2026 (Tues)	Maternal Health Data	1-2:00 PM	Subcommittee

## Save the Date for NOMW26

Save the date! The third annual NotOnMyWatch Conference returns October 21–22, 2026 at Emory Decatur Hospital in Atlanta. Led by Rose L. Horton and an inspiring lineup of speakers, this year’s event—*Hope in Action: Innovation & Reimagining Care*—will bring together leaders, advocates and innovators committed to improving maternal health outcomes. Join the conversation and be part of the solution as we turn momentum into meaningful action.


# SAVE THE DATE

**October 21–22, 2026**  
**Emory Decatur Hospital**  
**Atlanta, GA**

# #NOMW26

Hope in Action: Innovation & Reimagining Care

Rose L. Horton and a lineup of incredible speakers are back. Join us for the third annual NotOnMyWatch Conference + Hackathon and be part of the conversation and solution as innovation takes center stage.



**We know the problem, we've seen glimmers of hope for the future, now we take action.**

# Submit Your Events

Be sure to share your organization's events with us by submitting them to our team [here](#).

Find a full list of upcoming community events on our website.

See events

## Meet the Team



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Learn more about our dedicated team by visiting our [website](#).

