

MATERNAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH EVENTS DURING THE BIRTHING JOURNEY IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

AUGUST 2024

Mental health conditions are the most common complication of pregnancy and childbirth, with 1 in 5 women experiencing a mental health condition during the perinatal period (pregnancy through the first year after birth).¹ Perinatal substance use disorders are also common, with nearly 5% of pregnant women using one or more addictive substances during pregnancy.²

ACHI examined behavioral health events (including outpatient visits, emergency room visits, and inpatient stays) among 14,400 mothers who gave birth in Northwest Arkansas^a between Jan. 1, 2019, and June 30, 2022.^b Behavioral health events were examined in the prenatal period (the nine months prior to a birth) and the postpartum period (the 12 months following a birth). ACHI also compared the timing of postpartum mothers' follow-up visits within 120 days after behavioral health events to the timing of follow-up visits among all women ages 18-44 in Northwest Arkansas.

Key Takeaways:

- Behavioral health events were more likely to occur in the postpartum period compared to the prenatal period.
- Postpartum mothers consistently had lower follow-up visit rates after an emergency room visit or an inpatient stay compared to all women ages 18-44 in Northwest Arkansas.
- 61% of postpartum mothers had no follow-up behavioral health visit within 120 days of an emergency room visit.
- 60% of postpartum mothers had no follow-up behavioral health visit within 120 days of an inpatient stay.

Mothers With Outpatient Behavioral Health Visits


	PRENATAL	POSTPARTUM
OVERALL	14.7% n = 2,120	23% n = 3,319
MENTAL HEALTH	13.3% n = 1,915	22.7% n = 3,265
SUBSTANCE ABUSE ^c	3.4% n = 488	2.2% n = 322

"n" = Number of Mothers

Perinatal Emergency Room and Inpatient Behavioral Health Visits


Emergency Room Visits

Mothers Seen in Emergency Room by Perinatal Period



	PRENATAL	POSTPARTUM
	0.9% n = 128	2% n = 292

Mothers With Inpatient Stays by Perinatal Period



	PRENATAL	POSTPARTUM
	0.4% n = 63	2.7% n = 382

Mothers Seen in Emergency Room by Diagnosis Type

	PRENATAL	POSTPARTUM
MENTAL HEALTH	0.7% n = 97	1.5% n = 215
SUBSTANCE ABUSE	0.3% n = 36	0.7% n = 97

Mothers With Inpatient Stays by Diagnosis Type

	PRENATAL	POSTPARTUM
MENTAL HEALTH	0.3% n = 46	2.1% n = 306
SUBSTANCE ABUSE	0.1% n = 17	0.6% n = 87

¹⁻² For references: achi.net/library/behavioral-health-arkansas-mothers-nwa

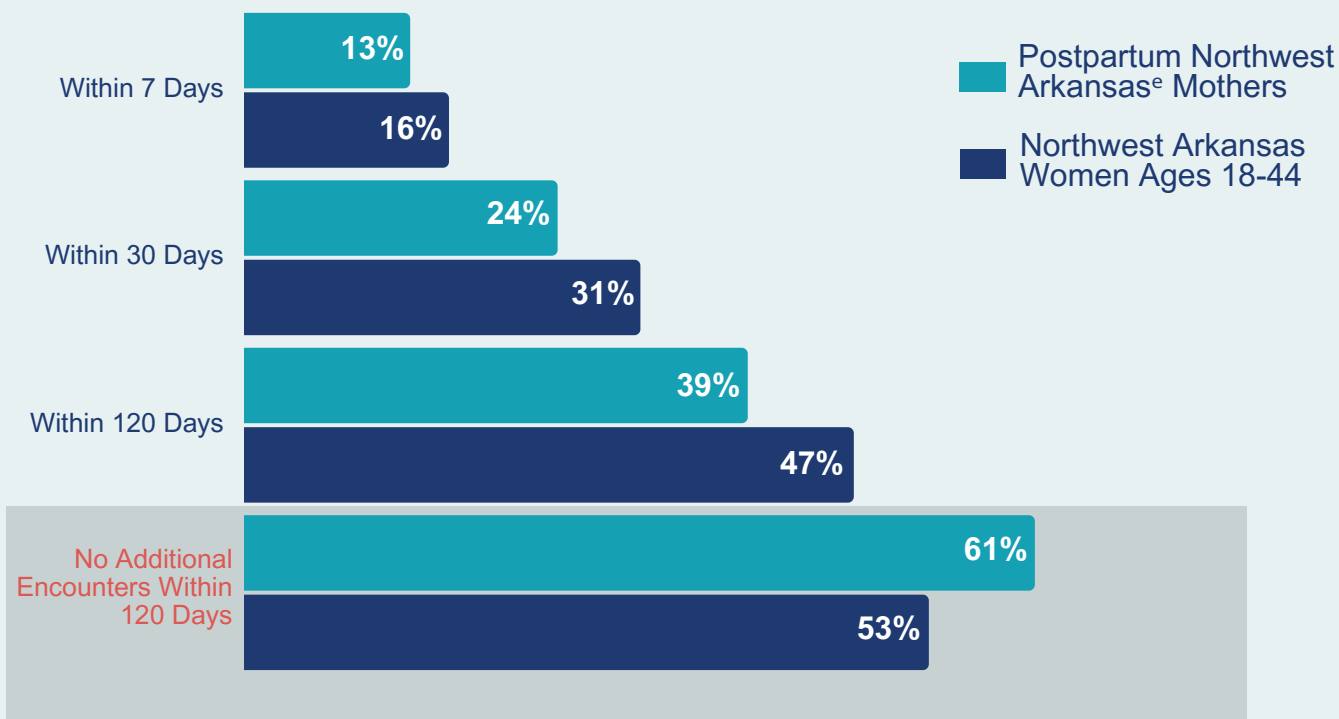
^a "Northwest Arkansas" includes Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington counties.

^b Only primary behavioral health diagnoses were considered for emergency room visits and inpatient stays, while primary and secondary diagnoses were considered for outpatient visits.

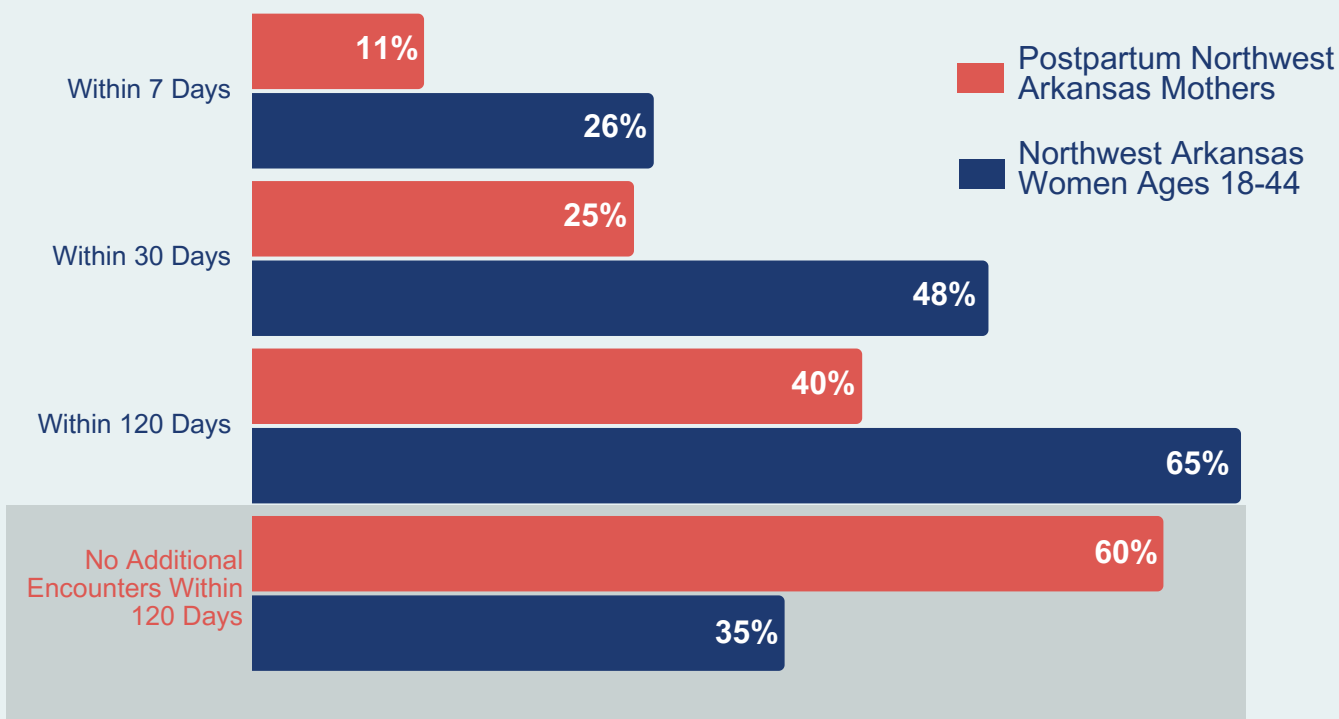
^c Excludes tobacco use.

Data source: Arkansas Healthcare Transparency Initiative's All-Payer Claims Database.

Timing of Follow-up Behavioral Health Visit^d After Emergency Room Visit



Timing of Follow-up Behavioral Health Visit After Inpatient Stay



^d A follow-up behavioral health visit is defined here as an outpatient visit following an emergency room visit or inpatient stay with a primary behavioral health diagnosis. Secondary diagnoses were not considered.

* "Northwest Arkansas" includes Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington counties.

Data source: Arkansas Healthcare Transparency Initiative's All-Payer Claims Database.