



March 19, 2025

Philips – Senate Majority Policy Committee Hearing on Improving Access to Quality Healthcare through Technological Innovation

Chair Argall and Members of the Senate Majority Policy Committee,

Philips is a health care technology company focused on improving health care and patients' lives. The company leads in oral health, medical imaging, patient monitoring, image guided therapy, maternal health, telehealth, among more. Philips also employs nearly 3,000 employees in Pennsylvania. Philips welcomes the opportunity to share how medical technologies can improve health care accessibility and ultimately contribute to better patient outcomes in Pennsylvania.

Philips is committed to serving as a resource as this Committee explores how to improve healthcare in rural and urban areas across Pennsylvania. This testimony outlines several Philips' innovative public-private partnerships that would contribute to this important mission. Philips welcomes an opportunity to replicate these partnerships in Pennsylvania.

Remote maternal health care solutions

Unfortunately, two troubling trends are colliding with one another that helps contribute to the maternal health crises that we are all trying to solve together.

First, access to care is decreasing. 12.4 percent of Pennsylvanian women have no birthing hospital within 30 minutes, and 47.6 percent of rural Pennsylvanian women live over 30 minutes from a birthing hospital. Between 2019 and 2020, birthing hospitals decreased by 14.1 percent.¹

Pregnancies are also becoming more complicated with more moms having high risk pregnancies. For example, from 2015-2022, pre-pregnancy hypertension increased by 81%.² In addition, 13% of pregnancies are impacted by gestational hypertension and 1 in 7 hospital deliveries are affected by hypertension.³ In addition, from 2015-2022, pre-pregnancy diabetes increased by 50% increase in U.S. Pennsylvania saw a 38% increase in gestational diabetes from 2016-2020.⁴

Women with chronic health conditions have a 56% increased likelihood of preterm birth (among other health risks) compared to women with none.⁵ Pennsylvania's preterm birth rate was 9.7% in 2022,⁶ which causes an estimated \$669 million in societal costs.⁷

Solutions exist that improve access to maternal care in rural and urban areas. For example, Philips is partnering with Georgia in implementing a state-funded remote patient monitoring

¹ [“Maternity Care Desert Report - Pennsylvania,” March of Dimes, August 1, 2023.](#) A maternity care desert is defined as a county without a hospital or birth center offering obstetric care and without any obstetric providers

² See [March of Dimes 2024 Maternity Care Deserts Report.](#)

³ See [CDC: Hypertensive Disorders in Pregnancy and Mortality at Delivery Hospitalization.](#)

⁴ See [National Vital Statistics Reports Volume 71, Number 3 July 19, 2022](#)

⁵ See [Where you live Matters: Maternity Care in Pennsylvania from March of Dimes.](#)

⁶ [March of Dime Report Card, Pennsylvania](#)

⁷ [Healthy Moms Strong Babies Pennsylvania](#)

(RPM) maternal health pilot program, enabling remote blood pressure and remote blood glucose monitoring for moms who have both pre-existing or gestational diabetes or hypertension.⁸ RPM programs use connected devices that track vitals to more frequently monitor patients, helping providers detect patient deteriorations before emergencies arise. The Florida Department of Health is also launching a state-funded maternal RPM program after piloting this program successfully for several years that reduced maternal morbidity and emergency room visits.⁹

Recognizing that rural Pennsylvania lacks access to broadband, Philips' devices are cellular enabled, don't need a smart phone to work, and are pre-programmed for that specific patient to use right outside the box. Philips RPM program overcomes barriers like broadband and smart phone availability, allowing patients to stay connected to their provider regardless of geography.

In addition, ultrasound is now highly portable and tele-ultrasound platforms exist to connect doctors and sonographers in one location to a patient being scanned in another. Several states are launching mobile maternity care programs that include portable and tele-ultrasound. In this year's FY 2025 Budget, South Carolina is funding a mobile maternity unit.¹⁰ The Oklahoma State Department of Health also just launched a fleet of mobile wellness vans that include Philips handheld, portable ultrasound solutions.¹¹

Virtual acute care solutions like eICU

In rural hospitals, providing adequate ICU care is increasingly challenging due to a nationwide shortage of skilled critical care nurses, specialist physicians and intensivists. Notably, in 2015, only 47% of hospitals met *Leapfrog's* recommended intensivists' coverage standards.¹² Without adequate intensivist coverage, patients are often transferred to other hospitals to get needed care, adding cost to the system and disrupting families by adding additional travel burdens and costs. Rural hospitals also lose revenue when patients transfer away to other hospitals.

Electronic intensive care unit (eICU) programs leverage technology to support rural hospitals. In its simplest form, the eICU allows off-site clinicians to remotely monitor ICU patients 24 hours, 365 days a year through audio, video, patient monitoring and predictive analytics technology while consulting with local bedside care teams. One centralized care team can monitor and support ICU beds across numerous geographical locations.

The eICU will also improve the financial health of the rural hospital by allowing them to treat more patients and transfer less, which reduces revenue leakage and increases their Case Mix Index overtime. eICU is also critical to the patient's health as it is widely proven to decrease patients' length-of-stay by 30%¹³ and decrease mortality by 25%.¹⁴

⁸ [Governor Kemp Signs "Healthy Babies Act", Aims to Provide Remote Patient Monitoring for Pregnant Women Under Medicaid.](#)

⁹ See ["Governor Ron DeSantis Signs 'Live Healthy' Legislation Package,"](#) March 21, 2024

¹⁰ See [FY 2024-2025 \(see page 461\).](#)

¹¹ See ["Mobile Wellness Units," Oklahoma State Department of Health](#)

¹² ["ICU physician staffing still lacking in many hospitals, Leapfrog report shows," Healthcare Finance,](#) July 2016

¹³ [Lilly CM, et al. Hospital Mortality, Length of Stay and Preventable Complications Among Critically Ill Patients Before and After Tele-ICU Reengineering of Critical Care Processes. JAMA.](#) June 2011

¹⁴ [Lilly CM, et al. A Multi-center Study of ICU Telemedicine Reengineering of Adult Critical Care.](#) 2014

Given these benefits to rural healthcare, Georgia launched the Remote Critical Care Services Grant, which offers state funding for rural hospitals to partner with Emory Healthcare’s eICU program.¹⁵ The eICU is gaining traction in other states as well; Tennessee included up to \$30M in funds to expand virtual acute care in the state’s Healthcare Resiliency Grant Program.¹⁶

Pregnancy apps to drive engagement in state programming and improve health outcomes

While many reasons contribute to poor maternal health outcomes, women may simply lack awareness of healthy prenatal and postpartum behaviors. For example, over 32% of all pregnant women on Medicaid don’t start care until the second trimester or later.¹⁷ Many expectant moms don’t take prenatal supplements, continue to smoke, miss routine checkups, don’t brush their teeth properly, don’t know how to manage stress, among other challenges.

However, resources exist to help families understand what it takes to have a healthy pregnancy. Yesterday’s pregnancy book that educated so many families on what to expect has morphed into a pregnancy app today. For example, Philips Pregnancy+ App is used by 45,500 Pennsylvania users last year (or ~35% of total pregnancies in the Commonwealth).

Pregnancy apps provide constant education like helping expectant mothers understand the changes in their bodies, teaching healthy prenatal and postpartum behaviors and explaining the development of their babies. This leads to healthier behaviors, improved decision-making, and reduced anxiety. Women who are more educated are better equipped to advocate for themselves and seek timely care, improving outcomes.

As moms increasingly access pregnancy information on their phones, states are leveraging this pathway to influence positive change. For example, according to internal surveys from Philips, 75% of pregnant women are unaware of state government resources.¹⁸ To tackle this challenge, States are partnering with Pregnancy Apps to improve awareness of and drive participation into state maternal and infant health programs. Here are a few examples:

- Michigan is partnering with the Philips Pregnancy+ App to connect users with state programs such as home visiting, WIC, doula support, and mental health resources among many more. In the partnership’s first 30 months, content highlighting these local resources was viewed over 2.25 million times by 32,000 Medicaid-eligible Michiganders. Nearly 3,000 users were referred to home visiting programs.¹⁹
- Arkansas recently launched a partnership with Philips Pregnancy+ App, connecting expectant and postpartum moms in Arkansas to state government programs.²⁰

Mobile cancer screening solutions to address lung cancer screening disparities

¹⁵ [“Emory eICU expand to two Georgia hospitals for remote monitoring of critical patients,”](#) February 20, 2023

¹⁶ [Healthcare Resiliency Grant Program](#), Tennessee Department of Health

¹⁷ See [Timing and Adequacy of Prenatal Care in the United States](#), 2016

¹⁸ Source: 2024 October study among Pregnancy+ users in Missouri

¹⁹ [“Leveraging an mHealth App to Improve Maternal Outcomes in Michigan,”](#) January 22, 2024

²⁰ [“Arkansas Launches Pregnancy+ App to Tackle Maternal Health Crisis,”](#) *Arkansas Business*, March 10 2025

Mobile cancer screening is another way to improve care in rural and urban areas – especially for lung cancer. In 2020, lung cancer killed 6,192 Pennsylvanians, almost as many deaths as the next three cancers combined.²¹ In Pennsylvania, only 17.2% of eligible individuals get screened, which leads to these unacceptable lung cancer mortality rates.²²

Individuals who smoke are 30x more likely to get lung cancer than those who don't, and smoking has been estimated to lead to 80% of all lung cancers.²³ At least 20 percent of adults smoke in 39 Pennsylvania Counties (e.g., Cameron, Forest, Mifflin, Fayette Jefferson), higher than the adult smoking population percentage across the rest of the Commonwealth (15%).²⁴

To tackle this challenge, Philips is launching mobile low-dose CT scanning to improve access to lung cancer screening. Low-dose CT screening scans reduce the lung cancer death rate by 20% by detecting tumors at early stages when the cancer is more curable.²⁵ Philips collaborated with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, New York to launch a mobile lung cancer screening program called "EDDY" (Early Detection Driven to You) to increase access to lung cancer screening in underserved and high-risk communities in Buffalo and the surrounding rural counties.²⁶ New York State supported the launch of this program in the state's budget.

Conclusion

Philips is committed to serving as a resource as Pennsylvania tackles rural and urban health challenges. Philips has already partnered with several states in launching public private partnerships to improve access to care and health outcomes for patients who live in rural and urban areas. Together, with Philips customers and government support, care can be transformed to help more patients access the care they deserve regardless of their geographic challenges. Please contact Evan Hoffman at evan.hoffman@philips.com or Kim Sokoloski at kims@onestrategies.com regarding these examples or if we can be of further assistance.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Evan Hoffman
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Philips

²¹ [United States Cancer Statistics](#), CDC

²² [Pennsylvania Lung Cancer Statistics](#), *American Lung Association*

²³ "What Percentage of Smokers Get Lung Cancer?," *Very Well Health*, 2/13/24

²⁴ [County Health Rankings](#)

²⁵ "State of Lung Cancer Report," *American Lung Association*, 2021

²⁶ "Eddy — Mobile Lung Cancer Screening," *Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center*