

History of BORN Ontario

BORN traces its roots to the 1980s and the Perinatal Education Program of Eastern Ontario (PEPEO). The program was led by Dr. Patricia Niday, who envisioned the use of data to support better obstetrical and neonatal care. At the time, many participating hospitals contributed monthly maternal newborn data to the Ottawa Public Health Unit for analysis and summary.

As hospitals throughout the region began to see the value of aggregating data to examine outcomes and identify areas for improvement, PEPEO became the Perinatal Partnership Program of Eastern and Southeastern Ontario (PPESO). Together with other Ontario perinatal networks, the organization began to lobby the provincial government for funding to expand the database, which was renamed the Niday Perinatal Database in the late 1990s in honour of its namesake's vision and dedication.

When the Child Health Network and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) member hospitals joined the program in 2003—adding 50% of births to the system—the database was still housed within PPESO and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; however, it then became known as the Ontario Perinatal Surveillance System (OPSS). Under founding director Jim Bottomley, OPSS developed the Niday NICU/SCN module, extended its partnerships, and encouraged more Ontario hospitals to contribute data.

Data in support of better care

The government's first provincial report on perinatal care was produced in 2006. Concurrently, reorganization within the Ministry of Health led to the formation of the Maternal Child Health Strategy Division. Responsible for a number of maternal child data sources in the province, the division quickly recognized the value of integrating data within a privacy environment to facilitate and improve care. The ministry directed OPSS to bring together data from prenatal screening, the Fetal Alert Network (for congenital anomalies), the Ontario Midwifery Program, the Niday perinatal and NICU/SCN modules, and Newborn Screening Ontario.

With new provincial funding, OPSS was rebranded as the Better Outcomes Registry and Network (BORN) Ontario in 2009. The five founding partner groups, BORN staff and project consultants worked tirelessly to design and build the new BORN Information System (BIS) while still carrying out partner program activities and using the existing data to support quality improvement and practice.

In 2010, Mari Teitelbaum was named director of BORN. She led the move toward full registry status under the Personal Health Information Privacy Act (PHIPA)—which was obtained in 2011—as well as completion of the BIS, which was launched on January 23, 2012.