



Talking Points

DHMH Calls for Improvement on C-Section Rate

September 1, 2015

- Maryland's hospitals are committed to ensuring optimal health for moms and babies at all stages of pregnancy, through pre-natal care, evidence-based medicine during the delivery process and post-partum care. This includes efforts to reduce the rate of C-sections in the state.
- Maryland's hospitals agree with the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) that the correct treatment plan for an individual patient is best determined by the doctor caring for her in consultation with the patient.
- Because of the clinical complexities surrounding childbirth, reducing C-section rates will be a joint effort on the part of physicians, nurses, hospitals, and moms and families, to develop a stronger knowledge base to guide decisions about cesarean delivery and to encourage policy changes that safely lower the rate of primary cesarean delivery.
- Hospitals have a strong track record in working to ensure the health of moms and babies, as seen in their work around breast-feeding campaigns, hard-stop policies on early-elective deliveries, and perinatal care improvement efforts.
- The Maryland Patient Safety Center, in conjunction with DHMH and MHA, and coordinating with ACOG, will be instituting a statewide collaborative to address this issue. The collaborative will make use of a forthcoming toolkit developed by ACOG that assists providers in reducing C-section rates.
- Regrettably, it is a reality of modern medicine that unchecked liability environments play a role in medical decisions. The National Institutes of Health found that C-section rates are higher in states where doctors face greater malpractice pressure, and reduced litigation pressure would decrease C-sections and delivery costs. Maryland ranks seventh in the nation in medical malpractice payouts.
- The Maryland Hospital Association is prepared to assist with the effort to reduce C-sections by convening hospital leaders, working with the Maryland Patient Safety Center, DHMH and ACOG to improve processes and share best practices, and partnering with DHMH to continue to share relevant C-section data and insights about the drivers of the increase in C-section rates.