Midwifery in the United States: Fact Sheet

**Crises of maternity care spending and poor maternal-infant health outcomes in the U.S.**
- The United States spends more than any other nation on health care, using almost half of all of the world’s health care dollars
- $98 billion of health care spending in the U.S. goes towards the provision of maternity care
- Despite large spending, the U.S. currently ranks 50th in the world for maternal mortality and 46th for infant mortality occurring during the first year of life

**Midwifery care leads to improved health outcomes and cost-savings**
- Studies consistently demonstrate reduced maternal morbidity, equivalent perinatal mortality, decreased technological intervention at birth, enormous cost savings, and high client satisfaction rates associated with midwifery care

**Improving maternal-child health outcomes: a comparison**
- Current U.S. cesarean rate is 32.8%
  - Midwifery cesarean rates range on average from 2.3% – 6.4%
- Current. U.S. prematurity rate is 11.99%
  - Midwifery prematurity rates range on average from 1.4% to 1.7%
- Current. U.S. low birth weight (<2500 grams) rate is 8.5%
  - Midwifery low birth weight rates range on average from 0.8% to 1.1%
- Low birth weight and prematurity are the two leading factors in infant mortality
- Significant health disparities exist in the U.S. among racial/ethnic minorities, low socioeconomic families, and other marginalized populations
  - Midwifery care can has demonstrated potential in improving health outcomes for vulnerable and disenfranchised populations

**Public health organizations recognize and support midwifery care for low-risk women, including:**
- American Public Health Association
- World Health Organization
- American College of Nurse Midwives
- National Perinatal Association
The Midwives Model of Care™

- The Midwives Model of Care is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes.

The Midwives Model of Care includes:

- Monitoring the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle
- Providing the mother with individualized education, counseling, and prenatal care, continuous hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support
- Minimizing technological interventions
- Identifying and referring women who require obstetrical attention

The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma, and cesarean section.

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Homebirth Statistics

- Number of homebirths in the United States: 29,650 (0.72% of all births in the U.S.)
- Homebirth trends: 29% increase in homebirths from 2004 – 2009
- Highest Rates of Homebirth by State: Montana (2.55%); Oregon (1.96%); Vermont (1.91%)
- Homebirths by Attendant Type: Direct-entry Midwives (42.9%); Certified Nurse Midwives (19.5%); Physicians (4.9%); Other Attendant (32.9%)
- Low Risk Profile for Homebirths: Preterm delivery (5.8%); Low Birth Weight (4.2%); Multiple deliveries (0.9%)

References

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