

Below please find the responses to your questions. These can be attributed to Jack Ziffer, M.D., Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for Baptist Health South Florida.

1. Are there specific reasons why your hospital's C-section rate is higher than the national NTSV (nulliparous, term, singleton, vertex) target of 23.9 percent? [To what do you attribute your hospitals' continued high C-section rate compared to last year?]

While many factors affect the C-section rate, maternal request and inductions leading to cesarean sections contribute significantly to our C-section rate. Some of these may be attributed to cultural preferences.

2. Are you currently part of any quality improvement projects/programs related to C-sections specifically (not just early-elective deliveries)? If yes, please specify which projects you have joined.

Our health system includes seven hospitals, four of which offer labor and delivery services. We have implemented a system-wide quality initiative aimed at reducing our C-section rate. A committee of physicians, leaders and consultants has been tasked with reviewing processes and adopting evidence-based protocols to reduce the C-section rate.

In addition, we are part of the March of Dimes initiative and the Florida Perinatal Quality Collaborative aimed at improving Florida's maternal and infant health outcomes through the delivery of high quality, evidence-based perinatal care.

2a. Is your hospital planning to implement any of the available QI toolkits, such as the Safe Reduction of Primary Cesarean Birth bundle from the Council on Patient Safety?

Our system-wide initiative will include using resources from the Council on Patient Safety's Safe Reduction of Primary Cesarean Birth bundle as well as the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative. This will include education for physicians, nursing staff and patients aimed at promoting vaginal birth and reducing cesarean section on maternal request.

3. What specific remedies have you already put in place to date to address your hospital's higher rate of C-sections?

A C-section peer review committee has been established to evaluate current practices and determine new processes to reduce our C-section rate. Based on the committee's recommendations and findings, we are working to standardize criteria for scheduling inductions in order to ensure a higher probability that they will lead to vaginal birth, setting forth management algorithms for labor dystocia and increasing our efforts surrounding education about vaginal births and C-sections.

4. Do you share physician-level C-section rates internally, with physicians who practice at your hospital? If you do, how is this information used?

While physicians regularly discuss this information and it is available upon request, this information is not widely shared internally.

5. Please describe the role that midwives play in your hospital.

Similar to other providers, midwives can apply to be credentialed to practice at Baptist Health facilities and work collaboratively with physicians. They are a valuable part of our care team.

6. What is your hospital's VBAC rate? Are VBAC candidates encouraged by your hospital's staff and care providers to opt for a trial of labor if desired?

Physicians work with the patients and their families to determine their delivery plan. When a physician determines that a patient is a candidate for a VBAC, our care teams support this plan.

7. What changes do you plan on implementing in the future, to address your hospital's higher C-section rate?

We are committed to reducing our rate of C-sections. In addition to continuing our process improvement work through our peer review committee as outlined above, we plan to expand our laborist program through which laborists are on-site to assist with proactive management of labor and help reduce the C-section rate. In addition, developing and implementing evidence-based protocols to reduce C-sections with real-time analytics to support compliance is underway.

8. What information do you share with patients regarding their delivery options at your hospital? Please send us any educational material you send to your patients.

Baptist Health offers a number of courses that prepare expectant parents for childbirth. More information on our maternity services and course offerings can be found at:

<https://baptisthealth.net/en/health-services/pregnancy-and-childbirth/pages/default.aspx>

9. Describe the role of your hospital's leadership (CEO, Board of Directors) in addressing your hospital's high rate of C-sections.

Baptist Health's leaders are committed to providing high-quality, compassionate care and consistently evaluate our processes in order to improve clinical outcomes using evidence-based standards. Our Medical Executive Committees across the system are also very involved in assessing and improving our processes, including addressing C-section rates. With oversight by the system Board of Trustees Quality and Patient Safety Committee, the Evidence-Based Clinical Care Committee has been charged with, and is developing and implementing system-wide protocols, including initiatives in reducing C-section rates.

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Let me know if there is anything else that I can help you with.

Dori Robau Alvarez