

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?**

Although the target rate of C-sections is just below 24 percent, our goal is to provide our patients with the appropriate care based on their presentation to us at the time care is delivered, which may result in a higher C-section rate. Many instances occur—for a variety of reasons—that result in a physician deciding that a C-section is in the best interest of mom and baby. We have analyzed the data, and we suspect the higher rates are partly due to the patient population that has medical indications for a C-section. This survey of data does not allow exclusions for patients with medical indications that would justify early elective delivery—cesarean birth or induction.

2. **Are you currently part of any quality improvement projects/programs related to C-sections? If yes, please specify which projects you have joined.**

It is important to note that we do not allow elective deliveries—either vaginal or C-section—prior to 39 weeks gestation at any Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare facility. The hospitals also follow a protocol for the use of Pitocin, which augments labor and has been proven to reduce C-section rates. In addition, Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare has several standalone Women & Teens Centers throughout El Paso that assist women and teens in prenatal care, which could help reduce the potential for C-section.

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

Our hospitals review and trend every C-section for potential opportunities to reduce C-section rates. We don't do elective C-sections before 39 weeks, so any reason for higher rates is because we have more patients that need them.

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?**

Yes, C-section statistics are compiled on a monthly basis per obstetrician. They are addressed by the chief medical officer of the hospital with the department chair and individual physicians.

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

We do not have a midwifery program within Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare.

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?**

VBACs (vaginal birth after C-section) are not encouraged by the staff or the medical providers of our hospitals due to the concerns of uterine rupture. Again, we do not allow elective deliveries prior to 39 weeks gestation at any Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare facility; C-sections only occur when a patient's physician deems it medically necessary.

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

C-section statistics are already compiled on a monthly basis per obstetrician. They are addressed by the chief medical officer of the hospital with the department chair and individual physicians. Our hospitals are also developing a perinatal task force, which will include obstetricians and hospital leadership, to review C-section rates and develop additional strategies to decrease them.

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.**

Our hospitals provide patients with an educational booklet that outlines our maternal child services.

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

C-section rates are routinely reviewed by the obstetrics department/section, the appropriate physician leadership, the medical executive committee and hospital management for appropriateness. If outliers exist, the data and action plans are presented to the hospital board for further evaluation. Elective deliveries are not allowed prior to 39 weeks gestation at any Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare facility.