

# American Association of Birth Centers

*America's Birth Center Resource*



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Birth Centers and Midwifery - A Solution for the Rising C-Section Rate**

Perkiomenville, PA. The nation's c-section rate is increasing at alarming rate. What can women do to avoid having a c-section? By choosing a health care provider and birth facility with a holistic approach to pregnancy and birth, women can improve the likelihood of having a vaginal birth. Birth centers have documented significantly lower rates of cesarean births (4.4%), which are less than rates recommended by the World Health Organization.

According to the article "Results of the National Study of Vaginal Birth After Cesarean in Birth Centers" [*Obstetrics & Gynecology (November 2004)*] there is no way for a woman who has had a c-section, to fully avoid the increased risks that come from having had a prior cesarean section. Her reproductive potential carries a scar for life, and that scar increases her risk for serious complications in subsequent pregnancies. Therefore it is important that physicians, midwives and pregnant women make every effort to avoid that first cesarean birth. The incidence of first cesareans is lower for births in birth centers and for hospital births attended by midwives or the services of a doula.

The landmark "National Birth Center Study" published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in December 1989 found that "few innovations in health services promise lower cost, greater availability and a high degree of satisfaction with a comparable degree of safety [... and ...] that modern birth centers can identify women who are at low risk for obstetrical complications and can care for them in a way that provides these benefits." The study also showed that birth centers have a cesarean section rate of 4.4%, which is about one half that of studies of low risk, in-hospital births. And, of mothers evaluating their care in birth centers, 98.8% would recommend it to friends and/or return to the center for a subsequent birth.

"It is imperative that we educate the public about cesarean births including the risks of cesarean birth, and risk factors for future pregnancies, which are largely unknown to the public, and how to prevent cesarean sections by choosing birth centers and the midwifery model of care." Said AABC President Jill Alliman, CNM, MSN.



*formerly the National Association of Childbearing Centers (NACC)*

The birth center is a homelike facility, existing within a healthcare system with a program of care designed in the wellness model of pregnancy and birth. Birth centers are guided by principles of prevention, sensitivity, safety, appropriate medical intervention, and cost effectiveness. Birth centers provide family-centered care for healthy women before, during and after normal pregnancy, labor and birth.

The American Association of Birth Centers is the nation's most comprehensive resource on birth centers. A non-profit membership organization founded by the Maternity Center Association under a grant from the John A. Hartford Foundation of New York, AABC is dedicated to developing quality holistic services for childbearing families that promote self-reliance and confidence in birth and parenting. AABC publishes materials on birth centers, sets national standards for birth center operation, and promotes state regulations for licensure and national accreditation by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers. More information about AABC can be found at [www.BirthCenters.org](http://www.BirthCenters.org)

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