

# MIDWIFERY = HIGH VALUE MATERNITY CARE



EVERY  
MOTHER  
COUNTS

## WHAT IS MIDWIFERY CARE?

The Midwifery Model provides care that is woman- and family-centered and relies on practices proven to have positive results for women and babies. Midwives are experts in supporting the physiologic and healthy processes of labor, childbirth, and breast-feeding.

The Midwifery Model emphasizes:

- An individualized approach to care
- Care practices backed by research
- Shared decision-making and respectful treatment
- Preventative and comprehensive approach
- Meeting the needs of vulnerable populations
- A collaborative health care team model

**The Midwifery Model of Care – the type of care that midwives are educated to provide – can be practiced by any type of health care provider, but is more common among midwives.**

The midwifery model of care advances each strand of the “Triple Aim” of health care improvement.



- By using medical procedures only when a need arises, midwifery care can reduce complications.
- Midwives build trusting relationships with clients to ensure that women have the information they need and the opportunity to lead decisions about their care.
- The midwifery model avoids wasteful and unnecessary spending.

## BENEFITS OF THE MIDWIFERY MODEL OF CARE

### OUTCOMES of MIDWIFE-LED CARE . . . compared with physician-led care

**According to research, care led by midwives gets results that are as good as or better than physician-led care.**

Midwives support physiologic birth, and their care has been found to lead to fewer unneeded medical interventions, a higher likelihood of breastfeeding, and greater patient satisfaction.

#### ↘ LESS LIKELY

- Cesarean section
- Episiotomy
- Epidural and spinal analgesia
- Use of pain medication in labor
- Serious perineal lacerations
- Continuous electronic fetal monitoring

#### ↘ LESS OR SIMILARLY LIKELY

- Use of vacuum extraction or forceps
- Induction of labor
- Labor augmentation
- Newborn admission to a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU)

#### ↗ MORE LIKELY

- Breastfeeding initiation
- More positive experience of care
- Greater patient satisfaction
- Greater sense of control and confidence
- Lower cost of care

#### ↗ MORE OR SIMILARLY LIKELY

- Vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC)

#### = COMPARABLE

- Apgar scores (newborn health indicator)
- Rates of low birthweight

**“Ob/Gyns and CNMs/CMs are experts in their respective fields of practice and are educated, trained, and licensed independent providers who may collaborate with each other based on the needs of their patients.”**

- Joint Statement by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM)

# POSITIVE CARE EXPERIENCES

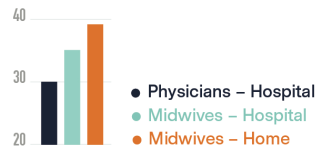
**Midwife-led care is more likely to lead to a positive childbirth experience and a greater sense of satisfaction, control, and confidence.**

## Active Decision-making

People cared for by midwives are more likely to feel that they can lead decisions about their own care. Open, honest communication helps ensure families are informed and prepared for birth, which in turn builds confidence in their ability to make decisions about care options.

### ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Median score by place of birth and provider type, NY



## Health Equity

Midwifery care can also counter some of the institutional racism entrenched in our healthcare system. A survey of childbearing women in New York found that overall black women were more likely than white women to be subject to disrespectful treatment, including being ignored, shouted at, or threatened or having their privacy violated during labor and birth. But a closer look showed that when looking only at people cared for by midwives, the disparity was eliminated.

Percent rated highly for **PROTECTING RESPECT, DIGNITY, & PRIVACY** by place of birth and provider type, NY



● Physicians - Hospital ● Midwives - Hospital ● Midwives - Home

## Respectful Care

Women cared for by midwives are more likely to say that their respect, dignity, and privacy were protected. Patients report positive experiences with midwifery care based on the “relationship-based” model that fosters trust, respect, and emotional support.

The midwifery model’s emphasis on continuity of care fosters the caring relationships that women report as being so important to them, as well as the trust that strengthens women’s confidence in their provider and their own ability to have a positive birth experience.

# COST OF CARE

**CESAREANS**  
cost  
**50% MORE**  
than  
vaginal births

In New York State,  
**REDUCING CESAREANS** to 1995 rates would result in...

**26,000 FEWER CESAREANS** each year  
for an expected annual savings of

**\$61 MILLION** for **MEDICAID** +

**\$106 MILLION** for **PRIVATE INSURANCE**

**Since 1996,**  
**the cost of childbirth care has tripled**

A large part of that increase stems from steeply rising **cesarean rates**. Cesarean births cost 50% more than vaginal birth for both Medicaid and private insurance.

**Midwifery lowers the cost of care by using fewer medical procedures, like cesareans, epidurals, and episiotomies, while avoiding complications.**

Avoiding excess medical procedures can bring down spending on:

- Procedures that are not needed or beneficial
- Treatments for avoidable complications and chronic conditions
- Repeat cesareans in later pregnancies

Increasing breast-feeding leads to health benefits that also result in cost savings.

## LEARN MORE in MAXIMIZING MIDWIFERY

**Every Mother Counts** is dedicated to making pregnancy and childbirth safe for every mother, everywhere.

[www.everymothercounts.org](http://www.everymothercounts.org)

All references available in the full report:  
Maximizing Midwifery to Achieve High Value Care

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