



# Effective Health Care Cesarean Birth in Low-Risk Women Nomination Summary Document

## Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- Cesarean birth in low-risk women will go forward for refinement as a systematic review. The scope of this topic, including populations, interventions, comparators, and outcomes, will be further developed in the refinement phase.
- When key questions have been drafted, they will be posted on the AHRQ Web site and open for public comment. To sign up for notification when this and other Effective Health Care (EHC) Program topics are posted for public comment, please go to <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/join-the-email-list1/>.

## Topic Description

**Nominator:** Individual

**Nomination Summary:** The nominator is interested in which factors influence the probability of cesarean birth in low-risk women and which interventions are most effective at reducing the risk of emergency and/or medically unnecessary cesarean birth.

### Staff-Generated PICO

**Population(s):** low-risk pregnant women with singleton pregnancy, vertex presentation, term delivery and no prior cesarean delivery

**Intervention(s):** consultation/prenatal care with a midwife; presence of doula or birth partner; trimester during which prenatal care begins; different pain management strategies; maternal diet; maternal exercise; birth facility; health insurance status; geographic region

**Comparator(s):** non-use of interventions listed above, "standard" care

**Outcome(s):** reduction of risk for/rates of emergency and/or medically unnecessary, planned cesareans

**Key Questions from Nominator:**

1. With rates of birth by cesarean on the rise, what factors influence (and which have the greatest impact on) the probability of delivery by cesarean in low-risk women?
2. Which interventions are most effective at reducing the risk of needing an emergency and/or medically unnecessary, planned cesareans?

## Considerations

- The topic meets all EHC Program selection criteria. (For more information, see <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/submit-a-suggestion-for-research/how-are-research-topics-chosen/>.)

- Interest is growing in the rising cesarean delivery rates and geographic variation in the US. Some of the Healthy People 2010 objectives focus on reducing cesarean births among low-risk women. Numerous meta-analyses and systematic reviews exist on specific maternal characteristics, intrapartum care methods, and childbirth-related interventions aimed to reduce the risk of cesarean delivery. However, there are no systematic reviews that synthesize these numerous factors into a single review document. Based on a scan of the literature for randomized, controlled, and observational trials published in the last ten years, it appears there is an adequate body of literature examining various factors, interventions, and practices that include cesarean rate as a primary or secondary outcome. Therefore, this topic will go forward as a new systematic review with a focus on the nominator's key question number two listed above, which focuses on the comparative effectiveness of different interventions.