



# Effective Health Care

## Maternity Care: Vaginal Versus Cesarean Section Delivery Nomination Summary Document

### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- This topic was found to be addressed by three products: 1) an in-process review titled *Vaginal Birth after Cesarean Section* by the AHRQ Evidence-Based Practice Center (EPC) Program, 2) an existing review titled *Cesarean Delivery on Maternal Request* by the AHRQ EPC Program, and 3) a corresponding NIH State-of-the-Science Conference Statement on Cesarean Delivery on Maternal Request. Given that the in-process and existing products cover this nomination, no further activity will be undertaken on this topic.
  - To sign up for notification when the *Vaginal Birth after Cesarean Section* report and other EPC Program topics are posted, please go to [https://subscriptions.ahrq.gov/service/multi\\_subscribe.html?code=USAHRQ](https://subscriptions.ahrq.gov/service/multi_subscribe.html?code=USAHRQ).
  - Viswanathan M, Visco AG, Hartmann K, Wechter, ME, Gartlehner G, Wu JM, Palmieri R, Funk MJ, Lux, LJ, Swinson T, Lohr KN. Cesarean Delivery on Maternal Request. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 133. (Prepared by the RTI International-University of North Carolina Evidence-Based Practice Center under Contract No. 290-02-0016.) AHRQ Publication No. 06-E009. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. March 2006. <http://www.ahrq.gov/downloads/pub/evidence/pdf/cesarean/cesarreq.pdf>
  - NIH State-of-the-Science Conference Statement on Cesarean Delivery on Maternal Request. NIH Consens Sci Statements. 2006. Mar 27-29; 23(1) 1–29.

### Topic Description

**Nominator:** Public payer

**Nomination Summary:** The nomination expresses several areas of concern that are also reflected in the current literature, including: rising rate and cost of cesarean deliveries, comparative benefits and harms of cesarean versus vaginal deliveries, and issues of risk and liability of delivery methods and the consequent impact on intrastate variation.

**Key Questions from Nominator:** None

### Considerations

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

- This topic was found to be addressed by three products.
  - An in-process report titled *Vaginal Birth after Cesarean Section*. This report may address some of the nominator's questions about variation, but would be limited to vaginal birth after cesarean and repeat cesarean section. The key questions include:
    1. What are the rates and patterns of utilization of trial of labor after prior cesarean, vaginal birth after cesarean, and repeat cesarean delivery in the United States?
    2. What are the nonmedical factors that influence the patterns and utilization of trial of labor after prior cesarean?
    3. Among women who attempt a trial of labor after prior cesarean, what is the vaginal delivery rate and the factors that influence it?
    4. What are the short- and long-term benefits and harms to the mother of attempting trial of labor after prior cesarean versus elective repeat cesarean delivery, and what factors influence benefits and harms?
    5. What are the short- and long-term benefits and harms to the baby of maternal attempt at trial of labor after prior cesarean versus elective repeat cesarean delivery, and what factors influence benefits and harms?
    6. What are the critical gaps in the evidence for decisionmaking, and what are the priority investigations needed to address these gaps?
  - An AHRQ report titled *Cesarean Delivery on Maternal Request* that reviews trends in the incidence of cesarean deliveries and addresses the benefits and harms of cesarean versus vaginal deliveries. The key questions include:
    1. What is the trend and incidence of cesarean delivery over time in the United States and in other countries?
      - a. What is the contribution of primary pre-labor cesarean deliveries?
      - b. Of the primary pre-labor cesarean deliveries what is the contribution of cesarean delivery on maternal request, for medical indications, and for malpresentation?
    2. What are the short-term (under one year) and long-term benefits and harms to mother and baby associated with cesarean by request versus attempted vaginal delivery?
    3. What factors affect the magnitude of the benefits and harms identified in KQ 2?
    4. What are the future research directions?
  - An NIH State-of-the-Science statement titled *Cesarean Delivery on Maternal Request*, which is based upon the AHRQ report above.