



CIMMS
COALITION FOR IMPROVING
MATERNITY SERVICES

1500 Sunday Drive, Suite 102
Raleigh, NC 27607

Tel: 888-282-CIMS (2467)
Fax: 919-787-4916

www.MotherFriendly.org

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CONTACT: Denna Suko
Coalition for Improving Maternity Services
919.863.9482
dsuko@motherfriendly.org

THE BIRTH SURVEY NOW AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE
Online Survey and Resource Launches as Part of National
Transparency in Maternity Care Project

Raleigh, NC (PRWEB) Dec. 4, 2008 -- For years, consumers have enthusiastically shared online reviews of movies, restaurants, products and services, but readily available information about maternity care providers was nearly unattainable. No longer. As part of the Transparency in Maternity Care Project, the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMMS) developed The Birth Survey (<http://www.thebirthsurvey.com>) as an online resource for sharing mothers' reviews of doctors, midwives, hospitals, and birth centers, learning about the choices and birth experiences of other mothers, and viewing data on hospital and birth center standard practices and intervention rates. This is a first, as no other consumer review site is dedicated solely to maternity care. The Birth Survey is now accessible online nationwide (in the United States), with initial results of the reviews available to the public in spring 2009.

The goal of The Birth Survey is to make quality of maternity care information about individual providers and birth settings conveniently available to help expectant mothers find providers and birth settings that are the best match for their needs and lifestyles. The Birth Survey collects data via two methods: consumer feedback, and data provided by each state's Department of Health. To obtain the consumer feedback, women who have given birth within the past three years are welcome to log on to The Birth Survey website and take a quick anonymous survey. The survey asks a variety of questions about each mother's individual satisfaction with her birth care provider and institution, and includes her feedback in the results, allowing other expectant mothers to benefit from her experiences. The Birth Survey is specifically designed not merely to ask the same set of questions of each participant, but rather, to "tailor" itself according to the specifics of each mother's birthing experience. In addition to the consumer data, The Birth Survey website will also publish obstetrical intervention data, such as induction and cesarean

Making Mother-Friendly Care A Reality

CIMMS is a not-for-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). Our mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs.

rates, for all hospitals once that data is provided by each state's Department of Health in response to requests by local CIMS representatives.

Transparency enables informed decision-making, and yet throughout the United States it is very difficult to access information about the quality of care that an individual health care provider or an institution provides. The 2001 Institute of Medicine report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm*, underscores transparency as one of ten key steps necessary to overall health care system improvement. CIMS supports the Institute of Medicine's recommendation that maternity care must be included in quality improvement initiatives, and thus created The Birth Survey to help enable that transparency.

CIMS maintains that having access to consumer reviews for each provider and setting, and official intervention rates for hospitals and birth centers, can lead not only to more satisfied and empowered mothers, but also to better maternal outcomes and maternity care improvements at the facility level. Providers and facilities that review the ratings from The Birth Survey can benefit from using the data available as a quality improvement and customer satisfaction tool.

From July 2007-July 2008, the New York metropolitan area served as the first test market for The Birth Survey. Consumer feedback on providers and facilities from this New York City pilot is now available to the public at <http://www.thebirthsurvey.com>. There have been more than 1,000 ratings posted for New York providers, hospitals and birth centers. The survey data collected tells us that in New York's five boroughs, mothers generally rate their doctors and midwives more highly than their hospitals, and overall, midwives are rated higher than physicians on quality of care measures.

The Birth Survey website is now nationally available online and CIMS invites all mothers who have given birth within the past three years to log in and take the survey. Results of the consumer reviews, which will be continuously updated, will be available in early spring 2009 and will be accessible at no cost, 24 hours a day, to expectant parents everywhere. CIMS is confident that The Birth Survey will make a significant contribution to providing transparency in maternity care for expectant mothers in every community across the United States.

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For more about **The Birth Survey**, to view the survey results for the New York metropolitan area, or to take the survey, log on to <http://www.thebirthsurvey.com>.

About the **Transparency in Maternity Care Project**: The vision and concept of the Transparency in Maternity Care Project was created in February of 2006 by the Grassroots Advocates Committee (GAC) of the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS). CIMS' GAC is a volunteer group dedicated to ensuring public access to quality of care information specifically related to maternity care providers and institutions. It is the GAC's intention to extend the current social trend toward transparency in health care into what has been until now the virtually overlooked maternity care arena. For more information about the Transparency in Maternity Care Project, log on to <http://www.thebirthsurvey.com>.

About the **Coalition for Improving Maternity Services**: The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) is a coalition of individuals and national organizations with concern for the care and well-being of mothers, babies, and families. Our mission is to promote a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs. This evidence-based mother-, baby-, and family-friendly model focuses on prevention and wellness as the alternatives to high-cost screening, diagnosis, and treatment programs. For more information, log on to <http://www.motherfriendly.org/>.