



CIMS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Choosing a Birth Care Provider? The Birth Survey Now Offers Access
to Reviews of Local Maternity Care Providers and Facilities.*

Raleigh, NC (April 28th, 2009)—CIMS, the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services, a group working toward transparency in maternity care, today announced that consumer survey results rating health care providers and birth facilities are now available online at www.thebirthsurvey.com.

The CIMS Transparency in Maternity Care Project: The Birth Survey is the first ever consumer ratings website dedicated solely to providing feedback on obstetricians, midwives, hospitals, birth centers, and home birth services. The consumer reviews include overall ratings and recommendations for birth facilities and care providers, and also a seven-item set of questions on providers' interpersonal and communication skills, facility intervention rates, and information on finding good care. A national average of ratings is also displayed to provide comparison with individual ratings.

“While consumers have long been sharing information online about products and services, more data was available for the purchase of a digital camera than had ever been available to women as consumers of maternity care. The Birth Survey directly addresses that information deficit,” said Robin Elise Weiss, LCCE, author of The Complete Illustrated Guide to Pregnancy and member of The Birth Survey Committee.

The Birth Survey is a user-friendly, free Website where mothers who have given birth within the last three years can provide detailed, anonymous feedback about their experiences. The survey questions are based upon the Mother Friendly Childbirth Initiative, an evidence-based model of high quality maternity care. Additionally, the interpersonal and communication questions are based upon an AHRQ survey, which represents a well known set of questions currently used by doctors and hospitals.

More than 17,500 ratings for providers and 6,500 ratings for facilities have been submitted since the national launch in August 2008. Now, parents-to-be can retrieve the pooled reporting on local providers and facilities.

The national averages of the consumer feedback collected indicate that midwives were rated more highly than the physicians. For example, 58 percent of respondents would recommend their doctors to family and friends, compared to 90 percent who would recommend their midwives. Across all providers, 77 percent of women reported that they had their questions answered completely, and 73 percent felt they were as free as they wanted to be in making their own decisions about their care. Averages,

Making Mother-Friendly Care A Reality

CIMS 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.

however, varied widely between individual providers.

The Website ratings pages also provide links to hospital and birth center obstetric intervention rates, such as c-section, for facilities in nine states. This information is part of The Birth Survey’s nationwide campaign to make facility-level intervention data available to the public. This kind of public reporting supports informed choice and fosters transparency, which improves outcomes.

Consistent with a new series of government Public Service announcements that encourage consumers to get involved in their health care and ask questions of their care providers, The Birth Survey offers links to information on how to choose and evaluate providers, including the “CIMS Ten Questions to Ask.” By offering more than a conventional five-star rating, The Birth Survey offers information that is vital for women to make more informed decisions.

“A woman who looks at a list of names from her insurance company is often choosing a provider on nothing but blind luck. Where and with whom to give birth are important health care decisions. Research shows that both provider and location have a significant impact on birth outcomes. CIMS wants expectant parents to ask questions of their providers and facilities, and have access to more information about their local options,” said Elan McAllister, founder of Choices in Childbirth in New York City and Co-chair of the The Birth Survey committee.

The Birth Survey is an ongoing project. In the summer of 2009, free-text responses will be displayed on the website, and in 2010, detailed information on patients’ experiences with prenatal, labor, birth and postpartum care will be added to the website as searchable custom reports.

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For more about **The Birth Survey**, to view intervention data for each state, the survey results, or to take the survey, log on to <http://www.thebirthsurvey.com>.

About the Transparency in Maternity Care Project: The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) through the Transparency in Maternity Care Project developed The Birth Survey so families can share information, learn about the choices and birth experiences of others, and view data on hospital and birth center intervention rates and practices. It is also designed to help providers and facilities improve the quality and transparency of their care. At the heart of the project is an on-going online consumer survey that asks women to provide feedback about their pregnancy and birth care specific to the particular doctor, midwife, hospital or birth center that served them. Responses are made available online to other women in their community who are deciding where and with whom to birth. Paired with this experiential data, are official statistics from state departments- of-health listing obstetrical intervention rates at the facility level.

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/>.