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Healthy Babies, Healthy Moms project launched to eliminate elective early deliveries

(Peoria, IL) – Quality Quest for Health of Illinois launched a state-wide maternity project to eliminate elective pre-term inductions and C-sections.

The Healthy Babies, Healthy Moms Team gathers representatives from hospitals and organizations to address the issue.

“We can have a lot of positive impact in the state of Illinois with the current interest in this topic and the way things are aligning,” said Quality Quest President and CEO Dr. Gail Amundson. “We are very excited about this project.”

The group will focus on:

- Identifying evidence-based guidelines
- Adopting processes needed to eliminate unsafe, pre-term inductions
- Selecting key quality and safety measures and determine a means of collecting data to report to Quality Quest
- Recommending approaches to heighten the awareness of clinicians, patients and families about the importance of full term births

Participating organizations include: Advocate BroMenn Medical Center in Normal, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Illinois Section, Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana, Caterpillar, Inc., Decatur Memorial Hospital, Illinois Chapter of the March of Dimes, Illinois Hospital Association, Illinois State Medicaid, LaMaze International, Memorial Hospital in Carthage, Methodist Medical Center of Illinois in Peoria, Midwest Business Group on Health, Optum Health, OSF Saint Francis Medical Center in Peoria, Pekin Hospital, Peoria County Health Department, Rockford Health Systems, United HealthCare, and University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria.

(more)

Twenty-three percent of Illinois deliveries occur too early

An unborn baby requires at least 39 weeks in the womb to develop fully. Sometimes there is a medical complication necessitating pre-term induction, in which case the induction is not considered elective.

There are many reasons why a mother might choose to time her delivery prior to the 39th week – to ensure the father is present before deployment, accommodate busy doctors or family, or even guarantee the once-in-a-century birthday of 11-11-11.

There is no reason for elective early deliveries. Shorter gestation periods increase the likelihood of problems in a fetus' brain development and function.

The risk of respiratory issues, seizures, and bloodstream infections increases even among babies delivered in the last three or four days of the 38th week, according to a 2009 *New England Journal of Medicine* study of approximately 25,000 elective C-sections.

Nationally, 18 percent of deliveries occurred too early, according to recent data released by the Leapfrog Group. The average for Illinois jumps to 23 percent.

The data shows significant variation among the rates of the 773 hospitals reporting that allow elective early deliveries – between 5 and 40 percent. This variation is present even among hospitals in the same state – even the same community. For example, the data found a variation of 0 to 27 percent in Boston hospitals.

The Leapfrog Group, an employer-driven hospital quality watchdog group, added this new category to their 2010 annual hospital survey.

About Quality Quest for Health of Illinois

Quality Quest for Health of Illinois is a non-profit healthcare collaborative working together to transform healthcare in our state. We bring physicians, hospitals, health plans, employers, patients, and families together to focus on creating healthier communities with better patient outcomes. We collect data related to specific Quest projects and report performance information to medical community and the public. The information helps providers compare their performance to peers and regional / national benchmarks and gives consumers data to make informed healthcare decisions. For more information, visit www.qualityquest.org.

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