

NEWS RELEASE

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VHI Releases Consumer Guide to Obstetrical Services in Virginia

*Free Resource is Nation's Only Obstetrical Guide that Contains
Hospital and Physician-Specific Information*

Richmond, Virginia—Childbirth accounts for one in every four hospital discharges in Virginia.

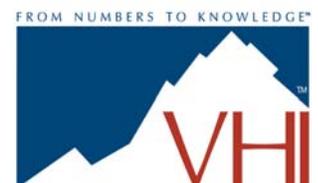
Virginia Health Information—Virginia's source for health care data—has published an updated, free, interactive online guide containing information on the quality and charges for obstetrical services in Virginia. Virginia hospitals and nearly 600 Virginia physicians were consulted and included in the guide. Expectant families can use this guide to learn about prenatal, delivery and postpartum care options, compare and choose health care providers and access helpful resources on making pregnancy and delivery a safe and positive experience.

Obstetrical Services: A Consumer's Guide contains information on everything from hospital facility amenities such as private labor and delivery rooms and birthing balls, staffing levels (including midwives,) pre-and post-delivery services (educational sessions, lactation consultants, materials provided upon discharge) to average hospital charges and cesarean and episiotomy rates by hospital and physician. Interesting general findings from the data include:

- Virginia exceeds the national average on rates of caesarean delivery
- There is great variation (from 2 to 60 percent) among physicians on episiotomy rates
- Hospitals vary in their performance and services offered to parents-to-be

VIRGINIA HEALTH INFORMATION

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“**Virginia Health Information’s** new consumer guide to obstetrical services is exactly the kind of information consumers need,” said National Partnership for Women & Families Vice President Christine Bechtel. “The wealth of detailed information it contains—including data about the delivery room environment and specific services each hospital offers in addition to cesarean delivery rates and physician profile information—is just what consumers need to know when choosing their providers. It is also a shining example of transparency in health care information and represents the type of tools we need to help improve health care delivery and quality. As the nation’s debate on health reform continues, it’s encouraging that states like Virginia are taking action to help their citizens make such important decisions based on good information.”

To access ***Obstetrical Services: A Consumer’s Guide***, visit www.vhi.org/ob_guide/ob_intro.asp

Virginia Health Information is the nonprofit organization the Commonwealth of Virginia and businesses go to for consumer and business health information. **VHI** information also includes hospitals, physicians, nursing facilities and other health care providers. Visit www.vhi.org or call toll free 1-877 VHI-INFO.

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