

# THE PERINATAL PRESS



*The mission of the Greater Adirondack Perinatal Health Network is to promote comprehensive perinatal health care by providing education, information and referral services to individuals, families and professionals*

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## **Becoming a Mother: How Pregnancy, Birth, and Nursing Help Women Negotiate the Journey**

*By Judith A. Lothian, RN, PhD, LCCE*

The transition to mothering that begins with pregnancy is a momentous journey for women. The physical and emotional changes of pregnancy, and the experience of labor and birth and early breastfeeding play important roles in preparing and guiding women on this journey. Nature intends that the physical and hormonal changes of pregnancy insure the growth and development not just of the baby but of the mother.

Traditionally, across time and cultures, pregnant women were surrounded by knowledgeable women, family and close friends, who supported the transition to motherhood with affirmation and great excitement. Pregnant women were treated differently, given the best food, and kept from undue stress and overly hard physical work. The pregnant woman was considered the expert in her pregnancy. She was encouraged to pay careful attention to her changing body, heart, and mind, and to her growing baby.

Today, pregnancy and birth are increasingly treated as medical events rather than as normal life events. Women believe that the obstetrician, the experts, hold the key to safety and must be consulted to find out every detail of how things are going. Women typically worry from one prenatal visit to the next, from one prenatal test to the next, that everything is “okay”. “Expecting trouble” has become the hallmark of contemporary maternity care. The experts exaggerate the risks of pregnancy and birth and increase women’s fears for themselves and their babies. “Expecting trouble” has resulted in an exaggerated concern for

safety, “intervention intensive” pregnancy, labor and birth, and, not surprisingly, an escalating cesarean rate. The costs to women and their babies is substantial. There are increases in late term preterm births and admissions to the NICU. There has been a dramatic increase in postpartum mood disorders, and post traumatic stress disorder. Breastfeeding difficulties and fragile attachment of mothers and babies are on the rise. It should not come as a surprise that women have lost confidence in their ability to grow, birth, and breastfeed their babies.

The fear the current maternity care system has created contributes in powerful ways to women’s difficulty negotiating tasks of pregnancy and the transition to being a mother. I think it is time to reverse this trend. What do women need to achieve the tasks and make the transition to being a mother? Recent research provides insight and direction highlighting the important role that nature plays in orchestrating the changes that guide women as they negotiate the tasks of pregnancy. Research also offers insight related to the complex issue of safety, and the process over pregnancy and after birth of the development of attachment of mother to baby. How women prepare for labor and birth has changed over the past decades. Fewer women attend childbirth education classes. Most women deal with issues related to pain and control in labor by choosing to have an epidural as early as possible in labor, or, increasingly, by planning a cesarean and avoiding labor completely. What effect do these changes have on the achievement of the tasks of pregnancy and the transition to being a mother?

The tasks of pregnancy provide for maternal role development. Research suggests that women, not

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## Becoming a Mother: How Pregnancy, Birth, and Nursing Help Women Negotiate the Journey

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experts, hold the key to safety for themselves and their babies.

We must help women move beyond the fear of pain in labor and meet the challenges of giving birth. The role of pain in a normal labor and birth is important in providing the alarm that brings support, a guide for finding comfort as well as promoting the progress of labor and protecting the mother and baby.

There is a need to move toward evidence based maternity care practices that promote normal birth and breastfeeding. The normal, natural physiologic process of birth helps women negotiate the

transition to being a mother.

The journey of pregnancy and labor and birth (and all the psycho-social changes inherent in the process) are intended to build the foundation for women's ability to give to their babies in the sacrificial and profound way that Rubin and Mercer describe.

Nurses play an important role in assisting women on this journey. Our job is more challenging now than it has ever been. We need to use strategies to reverse the trend and help women develop confidence in their ability to grow, birth, nourish, and nurture their babies.

### New Peer Education DVD Now Available "Teen View Peer Education for the Next Generation"

It was about three years ago that I received a copy of "Sex 411", an educational CD put out by Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County, and was impressed by the tool and its potential. The CD offers adolescent viewers the chance to take a virtual road trip that gives them the opportunity to learn about various sexual health topics. Watching the film clips on the CD, I immediately began to think of Teen View, a peer education program I have been involved with for almost 10 years, and the different ways that they might be able to create their own project.

For those readers who are unfamiliar with Teen View let me give you a brief explanation. The group is sponsored and staffed by Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson. The program started in 1992 as a small group of local high school students who would preview health class education material to determine whether it was teen friendly or not- hence the name "Teen View". The group decided that they wanted to create and present their own sexual health lessons. After receiving education and training by Planned Parenthood educators the teens create skits and activities that help get conversation around sex and sexuality started. Understanding that some things are easier to talk about with someone your own age the Teen View peer educators travel throughout Warren, Washington and Saratoga County presenting their interactive education on topics like; Abstinence, Birth Control, STIs, Relationships, Homophobia, Date Rape and bullying.

When I first thought of working with the teens to create a technologically savvy education tool I faced the challenge of how to get it to preserve the interactive elements an audience would benefit from in a

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*Teen View Members*

## “Teen View Peer Education for the Next Generation”

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live Teen View presentation. After some brainstorming with the teens and my colleagues I called Bryan Horch, the producer of “*Sex 411*”, and got the ball rolling. We drafted some basic outlines and a budget and quickly learned what we would need to get the group ready for such a project as well as make sure we had the funds to see it through.

After countless emails and phone calls we were ready to get started in 2007. The group decided to limit the number of programs they did and instead focus all their energy on making the project happen. When Bryan and his assistant Rye showed up to film, the group's hard work was evident. We had five days packed with filming and hours of film for Bryan to edit. In addition, the Teen View group left with memories that will last a lifetime and skills that will serve them through out their lives. Speaking for myself, it was one of the best experiences I have ever had with the group.

On May 25<sup>th</sup> we celebrated the project's completion with a “Premiere Party”. The teens realized what an incredible job they had done (and what important work they do everyday) when they stepped out of a donated limo and onto a red carpet to greet 115 screaming fans (mostly parents, friends and supporters). However, the evening not only honored the actors and actresses

in the DVD but also members who have long since graduated. We were all touched when we saw the faces and heard the kind words of members who came all the way from Syracuse and Manhattan to support the group that had made such a difference in their lives. Finally, the night was for the parents and family of the teens. It was an event to honor the great work they do by supporting their children, by loving them and encouraging them to do the same for others.

Now that the project is complete we are happy to offer schools and community groups a 30 min DVD that shows skits on: date rape, safer sex and homophobia. After each scene viewers are able to answer questions about the topic through interactive menus. Each answer given cues a different scene or classroom discussion related to the topic. By offering such an opportunity to our viewers we have honored Teen View's commitment to giving audience members the chance to discuss and explore topics in a way that encourage them to make healthy and responsible decisions in their own life.

For more information about Teen View, to book a presentation or to get a copy of the DVD please call:

Darren Cosgrove

Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson

518-374-5353 ext. 233



### Infant and Child Sun Protection

Health experts recommend that parents take the following steps to prevent sunburn and skin damage as well as dehydration that may come from too much heat.

Avoid exposing babies under one year old to the sun. Keep them in the shade, “under a tree, an umbrella, or a stroller canopy” (Health Canada, n.d.).

Dress infants in clothing that covers them, such as lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and wide brimmed hats (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006). “When adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply” a little

sun screen “to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands” (American Academy of Pediatrics). Use a sunscreen of at least SPF 15 and UVA/UVB protection.

“Just a few serious sunburns” or even too much tanning over long periods of time, can dramatically “increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life” (CDC, 2000, p. 1; Maguire-Eisen, Rothman, & Demierre, 2005). One sunburn may double a child's risk for developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer (Maguire-Eisen, Rothman, & Demierre, 2005).

# Perinatal Data System

## Statistical Summary Report as of 12/31/07

<b>Indicator</b>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Cohort I 1500+ Deliveries</i>	<i>Cohort II 750-1499 Deliveries</i>	<i>Cohort III 500-749 Deliveries</i>	<i>Cohort IV 0-499 Deliveries</i>
Total Deliveries*	16,990	7,551	4,039	3,168	2,232
Total Live Births*	17,331	7,779	4,089	3,208	2,255
1st Trimester Prenatal Care	71.7%	74.1%	70.6%	67.9%	71.1%
Late/No Parental Care	0.6%	0.7%	0.3%	0.8%	0.6%
Medicaid / No Insurance	41.1%	33.5%	43.6%	47.6%	52.6%
Mother < 17 years Old (at delivery)	1.0%	1.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%
Mother > or = 35 Years Old (at delivery)	15.8%	18.9%	13.3%	15.5%	10.2%
Induction of Labor (medicinal)	17.8%	15.5%	22.6%	15.6%	20.5%
Augmentation of Labor	32.7%	36.9%	25.8%	33.0%	30.5%
Cesarean Births (Total)	32.5%	34.2%	30.8%	31.0%	31.8%
Primary Cesarean	19.8%	21.8%	18.6%	18.1%	17.3%
Births Repeat	12.7%	12.4%	12.1%	12.9%	14.5%
# of attempted VBACS	335	152	41	111	31
VBAC - Successful based on attempts**	70.7%	76.3%	68.3%	64.0%	71.0%
Breastfeeding @ Discharge	69.5%	70.3%	73.6%	70.7%	57.7%
General Anesthesia for C/S	6.3%	6.4%	7.9%	2.8%	8.2%
Multiple Births (Sets)	331	218	49	40	24
Very Low Birth Weight (500 - 1499)	1.2%	2.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Low Birth Weight (1500 - 2499)	6.1%	8.4%	3.8%	4.2%	4.8%
Premature (<37 weeks gestation)	9.1%	13.7%	6.1%	5.0%	4.9%
Infant Received NICU Care in House****	5.3%	11.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
In-Hospital Deaths	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%

\* Infants weighing  $\geq$  500 grams

\*\* VBAC percentage successful = Number successful / Number Attempted

\*\*\* Numbers are based on how infant is being fed rather than mother's intent

\*\*\*\* Numbers are based on NICU admission rather than NICU care

### Cohort Information

**Cohort I** consists of Albany Medical Center Hospital, Bellevue Woman's Hospital and St. Peter's Hospital

**Cohort II** consists of Champlain Valley Physician's Hospital, Glens Falls Hospital, Saratoga Hospital, and St. Clare's Hospital

**Cohort III** consists of Bassett Healthcare, Benedictine Hospital, Catskill Regional Medical Center, Northern Dutchess Hospital, Samaritan Hospital, St. Mary's Hospital (Amsterdam) Seton Health System (St. Mary's-Troy)

**Cohort IV** consists of A.O. Fox, Adirondack Medical Center, Alice Hyde Medical Center, Columbia Memorial Hospital, Kingston Hospital, and Nathan Littauer Hospital



**MedQuest Camp 2008**, Hudson Mohawk Area Health Education Center is accepting applications for this three-day, health career exploration camp for high school students at Albany Medical College. Visit AHEC's website at: [www.gohealthcareer.org](http://www.gohealthcareer.org)

**June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>** – Annual NYS Perinatal Association's conference: **“Advancing Perinatal Health: Quality in Every Step”** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Albany. Find details and a registration form at [www.nyspa.org](http://www.nyspa.org)

**June 6<sup>th</sup>** - **“Evaluating Our Public Health Efforts”** The NYS Public Health Association's Annual Meeting at the Six Flags Great Escape Lodge, Lake George. Workshops on: “Diabetes and Obesity Prevention Initiatives that Work” also on tobacco control and using data to improve access to health insurance. Register online at: [www.nyspha.org](http://www.nyspha.org)

**June 10<sup>th</sup>** – **“Morbid Obesity in Obstetrics and Gynecology: An Expanding Problem”** with presenter **Nicholas Kulbida, MD, FACOG**. At the Italian American Community Center, Albany from 10:30am-12:30pm. Contact Nancy Strazzeri at: 518-262-0885 or [StrazzN@mail.amc.edu](mailto:StrazzN@mail.amc.edu)

**June 12<sup>th</sup>** – **“A Contraceptive Update with Dr. Robert Hatcher”** Robert A. Hatcher, MD, MPH, a board-certified pediatrician, author of “Managing Contraception” and renowned international speaker will be our presenter! Plan to join us at the Queensbury Hotel in Glens Falls from 11:30 am to 3:30 pm for a buffet lunch and presentation by Dr. Hatcher. For information and registration please contact Amy Zanghi at: [Azanghi@medserv.net](mailto:Azanghi@medserv.net) or 518-761-0300, ext. 219. Hurry! Space is limited and the registration deadline is June 6th.

**June 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>** – **“Maternal and Infant Assessment of Breastfeeding & Human Lactation for the Health Professional”** The Ramada Inn, Watertown. For further information call Ann Beevers at (315) 788-8533, Ext 230 or [ABeevers@ncppcinc.org](mailto:ABeevers@ncppcinc.org)

**June 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup>** – **“Transcultural Education: A Journey to Cultural Proficiency.”** Mallozzi's Restaurant, Schenectady, 9am-4pm. Learn the elements, attributes and influences of cultural proficiency with presenter Christina Glick, MD., F.A.A.P. For more information call Bonnie Gagnon at (518) 262-8447 or [gagnonb@mail.amc.edu](mailto:gagnonb@mail.amc.edu)

**Save The Date: November 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>**-for the National Perinatal Association's Annual Conference in Loma Linda, CA. This year's topic: Spectrum of Violence in Perinatal and Neonatal Health Care: Reducing the Risks and Stressors.



Upper Hudson Primary Care Consortium  
 Greater Adirondack Perinatal Network  
 One Broad Street Plaza  
 PO Box 3253  
 Glens Falls, NY 12801

Phone: 518-761-0300, ext 219  
 Fax: 518-480-0100  
 E-mail: [azanghi@medserv.net](mailto:azanghi@medserv.net)

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**Do You or Someone You Know Need Health Insurance?  
 We're Here to Help.**

It is Upper Hudson Enrollment Service's goal to help you find insurance or other assistance so that you can get the health care you need. There are programs like Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus and Medicaid that are health insurance we can help you obtain. We will help you find the right program, assist in enrollment and help with the required forms.

We want you to get the health care you and your family need. Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus and Medicaid cover a wide variety of health care services including regular check-ups, hospital care, prescription drugs, eye-glasses, vaccinations, mental health services, emergency room care and much more.

To find out if you or your family member is eligible please contact *Upper Hudson Enrollment Services*. If you live in Clinton, Essex or Franklin Counties please call 1-866-872-3740, in Warren, Washington or Hamilton Counties call 1-866-708-2912 and in Saratoga County call 518-580-2021 for *Saratoga Care*.

For more information about the Children's Health Insurance call toll free:

1-877-KIDS-NOW

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**GAP - Net Staff:**

Cathy LaMay  
 Program Director  
 (518) 761-0300 ext 216

Jackie Avignon  
 Program Coordinator  
 ext 217

Amy Zanghi  
 Network Assistant  
 ext 219