

US Financial Impact of Current Birth Trends

Prenatal Health Care:

Percent of women without health insurance in 1999: 14.6% (20.5 million)

The cost of prenatal care for one mother is \$702. When a woman does not receive prenatal care, she has:

400% increase in her likelihood of a low birthweight baby;

700% increase in her likelihood of preterm delivery

\$3,247 average increase cost of long-term postnatal care for baby

Annual healthcare savings obtainable by providing prenatal care to all high-risk women: \$62 million

Midwifery Services:

When using a Certified Nurse Midwife instead of an Obstetrician for normal labor:

19% decrease in infant death

33% decrease in neonatal mortality

31% decrease in low birthweight infants

21% decrease in likelihood of being admitted to a hospital antenatally

42% increase in likelihood of attending prenatal education

44% decrease in likelihood of infant requiring resuscitation

25% decrease in likelihood of receiving an episiotomy

12.2% decrease in overall cost of birth

Annual healthcare savings obtainable by utilizing midwifery care for 75% of pregnancies: \$85 billion

Cesarean Section:

Rate of cesarean delivery:

21.2% in 1998 (835,609 cesareans)

25% in 1992

5% in 1965

WHO recommended cesarean rate: 12%

Overall postpartum rehospitalization risk among women with cesarean: 80%

Annual healthcare savings obtainable by reducing US cesarean rate to WHO recommended rate: \$561 million

Breastfeeding:

WHO recommendation for age of weaning: 2 years

Rate of breastfed infants in US

At birth: 67%

At 6 months: 31%

At 12 months: 17%

At 2 years: less than 5%

Breastfed infants have:

19% lower incidence of otitis media

80% lower incidence of prolonged episodes of otitis media

50% lower incidence of diarrheal illness

1700% lower likelihood of being admitted to hospital for pneumonia

Annual healthcare savings obtainable by encouraging compliance with WHO infant feeding guidelines:

\$1.1 billion

Total healthcare cost savings obtainable by providing prenatal care, developing midwifery care and encouraging breastfeeding: \$608,661,000,000 per year.

This information was compiled by Tiffaney Isaacson for an article titled [What the Numbers Say: Birth, Breastfeeding, and Family in America](#) which was printed in the March/April 2002 issue of [Mothering Information](#). You can read her full report, which includes many more statistics about the physical and financial costs of maternity practices in the United States at [Mothering.com](#).

For more information about Global Day of Prayer for Childbirth visit christian.birthingnaturally.net