

# American Association of Birth Centers

*America's Birth Center Resource*



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## Birth Centers Receive Grant to Reduce Preterm Birth

*Washington, District of Columbia*-- Preterm birth is estimated to cost over \$26 billion per year and impacts close to 12% of all births in the United States. Preterm birth is associated with increased risk of lifelong health and developmental problems. The preterm birth rate has increased by 36 percent in the last 20 years.

In response to this persistent problem, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation announced early last year that it would be awarding grants to initiatives that could demonstrate viable models for reducing preterm birth. The American Association of Birth Centers was recently chosen to receive a **\$5.35 million four year grant** to measure outcomes and costs from enhanced prenatal care using the birth center model of care for women enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP who are at risk of having a preterm birth.

The birth center model of enhanced prenatal care program, known as AABC Strong Start in Birth Centers, will be evaluated in **40 birth center sites, located in 21 states across the US**. Birth center maternity care is focused on the needs of the woman and her family, and is a time intensive relationship-based style of care that employs evidence based care, collaborative practice, health education and emotional support. Birth center care is a collaborative practice, with teams of health professionals available for referral when needed.

"Freestanding Birth Centers have a strong track record of providing high quality care for mothers and babies for over 30 years in the U.S, including significantly lower preterm birth rates. AABC looks forward to partnering with CMMI to identify how birth centers can best contribute to a national solution to improving our maternal infant outcomes," said Jill Alliman, Project Director for AABC's Strong Start project.

The superior outcomes and cost savings of birth centers were recently re-confirmed by the National Birth Center Study II, published in January 2013. Study data demonstrate a 6% cesarean rate and significant cost savings over the cost of hospital care. Study authors estimated the savings from study participants in NBCS II of over \$30 million.

AABC is one of 27 awardees nationally, and one of two that will test the birth center model of care to reduce preterm births and improve maternal infant outcomes while measuring cost effectiveness of care. More information is available on the Strong Start initiative from the CMS Innovations Center.

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