



POSITION STATEMENT

Maintaining the Integrity of the Birth Center Model During Crisis

The American Association of Birth Centers acknowledges that:

- Many childbearing families are fearful about giving birth in a hospital due to the COVID-19 pandemic;^{1,2,3}
- Birth centers are experiencing increased rates of demand for services;^{1,2,3}
- The birth center model is founded on evidence-based standards of care for low-risk pregnant people;⁴
- Birth centers work together with other providers, facilities, and systems to ensure pregnant people receive the appropriate level of care throughout pregnancy, labor and delivery, and postpartum;^{5,6}
- Birth centers are a high-value option for maternity care and complement the existing hospital-based system;⁵⁻⁸ and
- The birth center model has been shown to improve health outcomes for childbearing families.⁵⁻⁸

It is AABC's position that:

- For the integrity of the model, and the safety of the families served, it is imperative not to deviate from the established [Standards for Birth Centers](#), even in times of crisis.
- Birth centers should review and modify protocols to adapt to safely providing care during the pandemic.

REFERENCES

1. De Freytas-Tamura K. Fear of 'COVID hospitals' leads women to pursue home births. *New York Times*. 4.21.2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/21/nyregion/coronavirus-home-births.html>. Accessed 4.28.2020
2. McCoy J. How pregnant women in Colorado are adapting to the coronavirus crisis to keep themselves safe. *Colorado Sun*. 3.29.2020. <https://coloradosun.com/2020/03/29/pregnancy-coronavirus-colorado-birth/> Accessed 4.28.2020
3. Chooljian L. 'We have people calling every day:' N.H. birth centers busier than ever during pandemic. NH Public Radio. 4.15.2020. <https://www.nhpr.org/post/we-have-people-calling-every-day-nh-birth-centers-busier-ever-during-pandemic#stream/0>. Accessed 4.18.20
4. American Association of Birth Centers. *Standards for Birth Centers*. 2017. <https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.birthcenters.org/resource/resmgr/AABC-STANDARDS-RV2017.pdf> Accessed 4.28.2020

5. Stapleton SR, Osborne C, Illuzzi J. Outcomes of care in birth centers: Demonstration of a durable model. *J Midwifery Women's Health*. 2013;58(1):3-14. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jmwh.12003>. Accessed 4.28.2020
6. Rooks JP, Weatherby NL, Ernst EKM, Stapleton S, Rosen D, Rosenfield A. Outcomes of care in birth centers: The national birth center study. *N Engl J Med*. 1989;321(26):1804-1811.
7. Jolles DR, Langford R, Stapleton S, Cesario S, Koci A, Alliman J. Outcomes of childbearing Medicaid beneficiaries engaged in care at strong start birth center sites between 2012 and 2014. *Birth*. 2017;44(4):298-305. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/birt.12302>. Accessed 4.28.2020
8. Hill I, Dubay L, Courtot B, et al. Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns Evaluation: Year 5 Project Synthesis, vol 1. <https://downloads.cms.gov/files/cmml/strongstart-prenatal-finalevalrpt-v1.pdf>. Updated 2018. Accessed 4.28.2020.

Approved AABC Executive Committee: 5.5.2020