Healthy Start CAN is an alliance of community members and over 20 agencies working to ensure healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries, and nurturing parenting for all families in San Diego County.

Guided by our community of partners, the CAN created the Interventions in Labor and Delivery Workgroup to address these issues by educating women, particularly the most disadvantaged, on their birth options in their own language, empowering them to share their birth experiences, and providing feedback to hospitals and providers.

Ultimately, the CAN Interventions in Labor and Delivery Workgroup aims to help improve safety for mothers and babies, and contribute to achieving national goals for all women in our communities.

Ways to get involved

- Talk to us about your birthing options or to share your birth experience.
- Participate in the CAN’s working group on interventions in labor & delivery (meets monthly).

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The CAN working group is sponsored by Project Concern International (PCI) in partnership with community organizations and members.

For more information on PCI visit www.PCIglobal.org

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What is induction of labor?
Induction is starting contractions before they have begun naturally on their own. This is usually done using medicine or other medical procedures.

Inducing labor with medicine requires a pregnant woman to be under constant fetal monitoring and may prevent her from moving around, which is a helpful practice during labor. It may prolong her labor and increase her hospital stay. Inducing labor can be helpful if the woman and her baby are very sick and her provider determines it will be safer to have the baby now, or if she has two or more weeks past her estimated due date.

What is a cesarean section/ c-section?
A cesarean section, or c-section, is the delivery of a baby through a surgical incision in the mother’s abdomen.

While critical in some circumstances, C-sections can increase the risk of infection or blood loss, extend recovery time, and can increase the risks of complications in future pregnancies. Babies born by c-section are more likely to have respiratory problems, and can have trouble breastfeeding.

What is a primary C-section?
Primary C-sections are cesarean deliveries among full term, low risk pregnancies to women giving birth for the rst time.

The chances of needing a delivery by cesarean section may increase when labor is induced. A woman’s chance for C-section is higher if: her cervix is not already starting to open when labor is induced, if she is having her rst baby, and if she is very overweight.

A Public Health Concern

- Reducing primary C-sections to 23.9% of births is a national Healthy People 2020 Goal.

- Consistent with national trends, California’s rate of C-sections has increased from one fifth of all births in 1997 to one-third in 2014.

- San Diego County’s rate of primary C-sections remains higher than all other urban counties in California (29.7% San Diego vs. 26% California).

- Statewide data show that African American women and the uninsured are significantly more likely to have primary C-section.

- Many women report pressure from providers to induce or give birth by cesarean. National surveys show that mothers who had an induction or cesarean were three times more likely to receive pressure compared with mothers who received no pressure. (see chart above)

- Studies have found that when patients are part of the medical decision-making process, they often opt for more conservative, and less expensive treatment options without compromising their health.