Blue Cross Blue Shield Designated Hospitals Decrease C-section Rates By 32 Percent

22 Massachusetts hospitals are among the nation's Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care

BOSTON, June 27, 2018 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care, including 22 hospitals in Massachusetts, are leading the nation in the reduction of cesarean delivery (C-section) rates for first-time mothers in what is regarded as an important step toward lower risks for mothers and babies.



Hospitals nationwide in the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association ("BCBSA") program achieved a 32 percent lower C-section rate compared to hospitals not in the program. The average C-section rate of 23.7 percent at these hospitals beat the federal Healthy People 2020 goal to reduce C-section rates for first-time, low-risk mothers in the U.S to 23.9 percent by 2020, according to a Blue Cross Blue Shield Health of America Report

"Nationwide, about one-third of all births today are via C-section, compared with about 5 percent of births in the early 1970s and compared with rates of 15-22% in most economically developed countries," said Dana Gelb Safran, ScD, chief performance measurement and improvement officer at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "While there are clinical circumstances in which a C-section delivery is necessary, the unexplainably high rates in the U.S. are cause for concern because of the risks posed to both mother and baby. By offering Blue Distinction status to hospitals that are addressing the overuse of C-sections, we hope to both inform women's choice of facilities for child birth, and to continue to motivate hospitals statewide to work on this extremely important safety issue."

The risk

For most normal pregnancies, cesarean delivery poses a greater risk of complications for the mother -- such as hemorrhage, blood cloths, and/or major infection -- than a vaginal delivery. There are also long-term risks associated with C-section deliveries if the woman has more children.

In addition to the medical risk, C-sections that are not medically necessary cost the health system more. For commercially insured Blue Cross Blue Shield members, C-section births cost, on average, $4,157 more than a vaginal birth.

About the program

In order to qualify for a Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care designation, a hospital has to demonstrate expertise and a commitment to quality care for both vaginal and cesarean deliveries, including a C-section rate of 27 percent or lower, and fewer early elective deliveries than the national average. Compared with other hospitals, Blue Distinction Centers have 70 percent fewer early (37-39 weeks) elective deliveries and 53 percent fewer episiotomies. These hospitals also demonstrate better overall performance on patient experience.

BCBSA announced the national designation in 2016 to help prospective parents find hospitals that deliver quality, affordable maternity care. BCBS companies across the nation have recognized more than 1,080 hospitals for quality maternity care.

Blue Distinction Centers for Maternity Care in Massachusetts

Anna Jaques Hospital	Berkshire Medical Center	Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center	Beverly Hospital
Cape Cod Hospital	Emerson Hospital	Good Samaritan Medical Center	Lawrence General Hospital

Lowell General Hospital	Melrose-Wakefield Hospital	Mercy Medical Center	Metrowest Medical Center
Mount Auburn Hospital	North Shore Medical Center	Norwood Hospital	Saint Vincent Hospital
Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital	Southcoast Hospitals Group - Charlton Memorial	Southcoast Hospitals Group - St. Luke's Hospital	The Cooley Dickinson Hospital
Tufts Medical Center	Winchester Hospital		

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (bluecrossma.com) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not–for–profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We're the trusted health plan for more than 25,000Massachusetts employers and are committed to working with others in a spirit of shared responsibility to make quality health care affordable. Consistent with our corporate promise to always put our 2.8 million members first, we're rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association
The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide health care coverage for one in three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through The Health of America Report series and the national BCBS Health Index[sm]. For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit BCBS.com. We also encourage you to connect with us on Facebook, check out our videos on YouTube, follow us on Twitter and check out our blog.

About Blue Distinction Centers
Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures, developed with input from the medical community. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for providers located in its own service area; for details, contact your Local Blue Plan. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers' need for affordable healthcare. Each provider's cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Providers in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans' areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. National criteria for BDC and BDC+ are displayed on www.bcbs.com. Individual outcomes may vary. For details on a provider's in-network status or your own policy's coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan and ask your provider before making an appointment. Neither Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for non-covered charges or other losses or damages resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

For further information: Amy McHugh, amy.mchugh@bcbsma.com, 617-246-2311