

The Healthy Start Coalition of Brevard County is a local, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that works to make sure that all moms and babies have the services they need to begin healthy lives together. Healthy Start provides moms, newborns and families with the resources, help and support they need to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby. Free services are based on risk factors, not on income or insurance.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Due to the impact of COVID-19, Healthy Start is still taking every precaution we can for the safety of our staff and our moms and babies of Brevard, while working within the best practices set forth by the CDC, the Florida Department of Health, and the State of Florida. Our “home-visiting” services are currently being provided via video/phone conferencing and are starting to transition back to in-person visits. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at 321.634.6101.



## Local Resources Spotlight

### Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

WIC is a federally funded nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children.



On March 12, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) authorized State WIC Agencies to enhance the WIC benefit for a period of four months, **expanding the vegetable and fruit voucher** from \$9/month for children and \$11/month for women to **\$35 per month, per participant**. WIC’s vegetable and fruit voucher is known as the Cash Value Benefit (CVB). The CVB is credited with improving the dietary quality of WIC participants and reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity among WIC toddlers.

Florida WIC will be implementing the CVB increase beginning June 1, 2021 until September 30, 2021. All women and children 1 – 4 years old who participate in the WIC Program will receive an increase in their fruits and vegetables cash voucher to \$35 per participant, per month. For example, a pregnant woman and her 2-year-old child will receive a total of \$70 cash voucher to use on fruits and vegetables per month from June – September 2021. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, frozen or canned. Any brand, variety, size, with no added sugar, syrup, artificial sweeteners, fat, or oil. Organic fruits and vegetables are allowed.

#### Who is Eligible?

- Women who have recently been pregnant
- Infants and children under five years old
- You must be moderate or low income
- You do not have to be on public assistance to apply

To apply for WIC benefits,  
have your client/patient make an appointment at a WIC local office:  
(321) 639-5793

## What is Community Connect?

Community Connect provides a one-stop entry point for needed services. Community Connect contacts, assesses, provides information, and makes referrals to home visiting programs and other community services. Eligibility for Community Connect begins when a pregnant woman or infant is screened and referred by their health care provider or hospital through the prenatal and infant risk screens.



#### Services and Resources may include:

- Childbirth education
- Newborn care instruction
- Breastfeeding education and support
- Child development education and support
- Parenting education and support
- Help to quit smoking
- Nutritional education
- School readiness
- Family planning education
- Car seat safety
- Infant safety
- Counseling services
- Home visiting programs:  
Healthy Families, Healthy Start, & Nurse Family Partnership

**Connect Today!**  
**Call 321-634-6101**

# CESAREAN SECTIONS IN FLORIDA

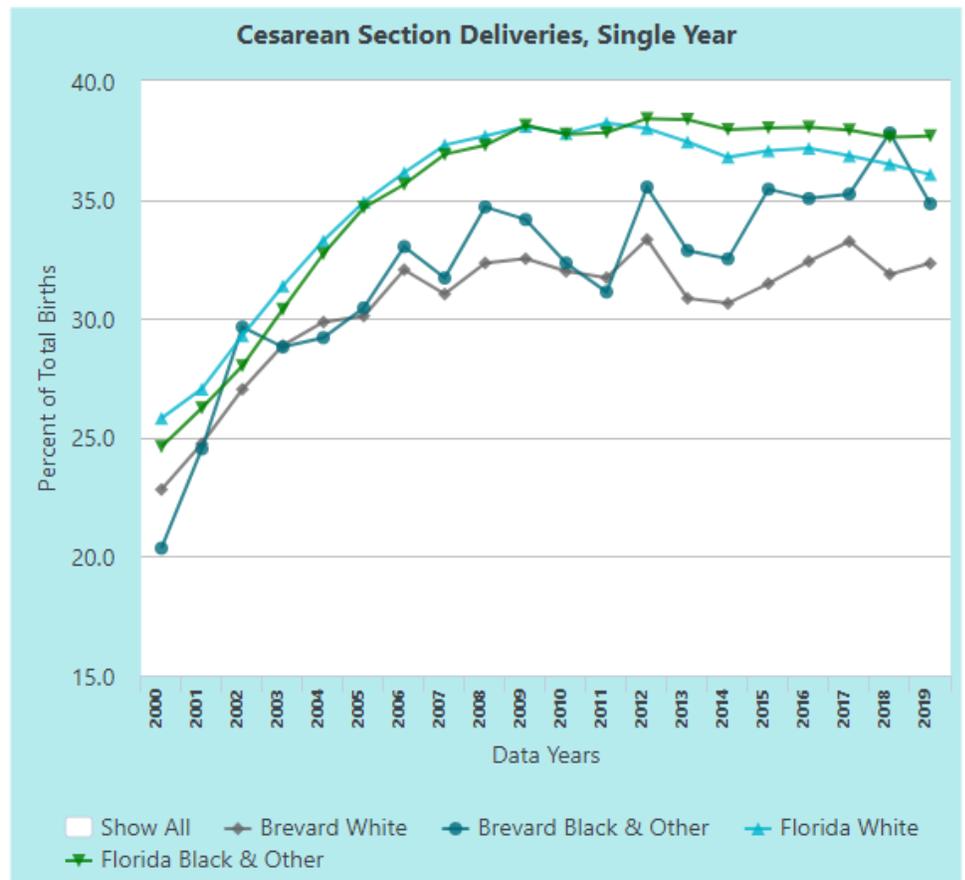
*A Message dated January 4, 2021 from the State Surgeon General, Dr. Scott A. Rivkees, and the Acting Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration, Shevaun L. Harris, on Primary Cesarean Sections (C-sections) in Florida.*

About 220,000 babies are born in Florida each year and Medicaid pays for more than (56 percent) of all births. Florida's C-section rate for 2019 was 36.5 percent, which is higher than the Healthy People 2030 target goal of 23.6 percent. However, the rate has decreased over the past five years from 37.3 percent in 2015. C-section rates in Florida delivery hospitals for low-risk women with no prior births ranged from 11 percent to 58 percent. Variations in C-section delivery rate patterns indicate that there are opportunities for quality improvement.

In January 2021, the Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) and Florida Department of Health (DOH) launched My Birth Matters Florida, a statewide awareness campaign modeled after the California My Birth Matters campaign ([MyBirthMatters.org](http://MyBirthMatters.org)). The purpose of this campaign is to educate Florida consumers, specifically pregnant women, about the overuse of C-sections and to encourage safe deliveries and maternity care practices with the help of their pregnancy care team.

The campaign offers **free educational materials including posters, brochures, and social media posts** created by the California Health Care Foundation, the California Maternal Care Quality Collaborative, and Consumer Reports. Health care providers are encouraged to share these educational materials with their patients and their partners.

While lifesaving in certain cases, the overuse of C-sections can pose serious health risks for women such as hemorrhage, uterine rupture, cardiac events, and increased postpartum readmissions; and for babies, complications include infection, respiratory issues, and longer hospital stays in the neonatal intensive care unit. Once a woman has a cesarean, she has a greater chance of having a C-section for subsequent births and a higher risk of a preterm birth.



The Agency and DOH are working in concert with community stakeholders, health plans, and other state agencies to reduce maternal and infant mortality and morbidity by using evidence-based strategies and promising practices. Moving forward, the agencies will continue to align efforts and encourage collaboration among providers and community organizations to ensure women and infants have timely access to quality perinatal care services.

**My Birth Matters**  
[www.MyBirthMatters.org](http://www.MyBirthMatters.org)

Please find the following materials provided by the Department of Health and Agency for Health Care Administration for your office and pass out to your patients:

- **Official Message dated January 4, 2021**
- **Rack Card: How To Reduce Your Chances of Having a C-Section**
- **Poster: How To Reduce Your Chances of Having a C-Section**

Statistics: Florida Department of Health, <http://www.flpublichealth.com/>