National Statistics for 2002:

**Cesarean Rate Rises to Highest Ever Reported in the United States – 26.1%**

The National Center for Health Statistics released preliminary data for births in the U.S. for 2002 (June 2003). You can read the press release and find a link for the entire document at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/releases/03news/lowbirth.htm. According to the report:

- **More than one fourth of all children born in 2002 were delivered by cesarean**: the total cesarean delivery rate of 26.1 percent was the highest level ever reported in the United States. The cesarean delivery rate declined during the late 1980s through the mid-1990s but has been on the rise since 1996.

- The number of cesarean births to women with no previous cesarean birth jumped 7%.

- The rate of vaginal births after previous cesarean delivery (VBACs) dropped 23%.

**Has this resulted in better outcomes for mothers and babies? NO!**

- **Infant Mortality**: The US ranks 28th in infant mortality among industrialized nations (behind the Czech Republic and Cuba) as of 1998 (most recent numbers available). *(Child Health USA 2002, Maternal Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, US Department of Health and Human Services http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa02/main_pages/page_03.htm)*

- **Maternal Mortality**: In 1999, the US ranked 21st in the world for maternal death. However the CDC estimates that maternal deaths are underreported by one half to two thirds, and that half of US maternal deaths are preventable. The rate of death due to childbirth has not decreased since 1982, and increased in 1999. *(Ina May’s Guide to Childbirth. Ina May Gaskin. Bantam, 2003. pp 274-277)*

**What is a reasonable cesarean section rate? Only 10 to 15%!**

“… the World Health Organization concluded that … there was no justification for any region to have a cesarean rate more than 10 to 15 percent (58). As for midwives, in looking at six studies of hospital-based midwives, all but one study reported rates of 10 percent or less, while of 29 studies of midwives attending births outside of the hospital, none reported a cesarean rate over seven percent (20).” *(Cesarean section: What you need to know. Henci Goer. www.parentsplace.com/print/0,,241096,00.html)*

The **Midwives Model of Care** has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma and cesarean section.