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Indiana Hospital Association, Indiana State Department of Health Collaborate to Reduce Early Elective Deliveries for Expectant Mothers

Elective deliveries prior to 39 weeks of pregnancy reduced to less than three percent in Indiana

Indianapolis, Ind. – The Indiana Hospital Association (IHA) and the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) are pleased to announce significant progress in bringing down Indiana's early elective delivery rate for expectant mothers. Since 2010, IHA, ISDH and the Indiana Perinatal Network have collaborated on efforts to reduce the number of deliveries prior to 39 weeks of pregnancy without a valid medical reason. Through quality improvement initiatives, Indiana hospitals have been successful in reducing early elective deliveries before 39 weeks to a rate of less than three percent, compared to 11 percent in 2012.

"This significant reduction in Indiana's early elective delivery rate shows that hospitals have made tremendous strides in improving the quality of life for both mothers and their newborns," said Doug Leonard, president of the Indiana Hospital Association.

Groups such as the March of Dimes, the Indiana Perinatal Network and the Indiana Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning advise against early elective deliveries without medical reason prior to 39 weeks of pregnancy to prevent complications at birth for both the mother and the infant.

"We've seen improved health outcomes in Indiana with hospitals adopting hard-stop policies. Last year, 429 dangerous early elective deliveries were avoided," said Leonard. "Hospitals that have implemented a hard-stop policy have virtually eliminated early elective deliveries."

In January 2013, the Indiana State Department of Health formed the Indiana Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative, co-chaired by Indiana State Health Commissioner Dr. William VanNess, II and IHA President Doug Leonard to address ongoing issues related to perinatal care. The Indiana Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative continues to recommend a hard-stop policy to ensure procedures are in place among hospitals across the state.

"Not only are we headed in the right direction, but we are very near the goal line," said State Health Commissioner William VanNess, II, M.D. "Reducing early elective deliveries before 39 weeks of pregnancy has been a priority for the Indiana Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative, and we are pleased to see such positive momentum for health care in Indiana."

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Indiana Hospital Association is a non-profit organization that serves as the professional trade association for 164 Hoosier hospitals. These members are either independent or a member of one of the 23 systems in the state. Membership includes hospitals, multi-hospital systems and community mental health centers. The mission of the IHA is to provide leadership, representation and services in the common best interests of its members as they promote the improvement of community health status. IHA's primary responsibility is to represent the interests of hospitals in matters of public policy. IHA also provides members with education, communications and data collection services.