

NINETY
YEARS
BABY!

C H I L D B I R T H C O N N E C T I O N



Childbirth Connection is a national not-for-profit organization founded in 1918 as Maternity Center Association (MCA) to reduce maternal and infant mortality in New York City. By fostering access to high-quality prenatal, childbirth and postpartum care and education that met the needs of underserved women, MCA achieved significant measured success. This focus on effective ways to improve the quality of maternity care and address best interests of women, babies, and families has continued throughout the organization's history.

DECADES OF INNOVATION

In the decades that followed, MCA provided leadership inaugurating and strengthening many core elements of the maternity care system and related health policy, including: maternity nursing, childbirth and parenting education, nurse-midwifery education and credentialing, out-of-hospital birth centers, program evaluation, collaborative practice, and public education.

IMPROVING MATERNITY CARE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

As the 20th century came to a close, MCA assessed contemporary maternity services and the wealth of best available evidence on care for pregnancy and childbirth. We found that many important lessons from the best research were not being translated into routine maternity care practice. To address this evidence-practice gap, MCA inaugurated in 2000 a long-term national program to promote evidence-based maternity care through three strategies: research, education and advocacy. Since that time, the organization has commissioned and conducted many systematic and narrative reviews to clarify best evidence regarding safety and effectiveness of important maternity practices, conducted three pioneering national surveys of women's childbearing experiences, carried out national media outreach campaigns to

educate women and the general public about safe and effective maternity care, developed and updated an award-winning website with evidence-based resources for women and health professionals, engaged consumers in providing feedback to improve reviews of research, informed health professionals about safe and effective maternity care through leading professional journals, and raised awareness among elected officials and policymakers about the need to improve maternity care.

In 2006, MCA became Childbirth Connection to better reflect its contemporary focus and expanded its mission statement to improve the quality of maternity care through research, education, advocacy, and policy. Through its *Maternity Quality Matters Initiative*, Childbirth Connection focuses on policy as a core strategy to foster a maternity care system that delivers care of the highest quality and value to achieve optimal health outcomes and experiences for mothers and babies.

Childbirth Connection is taking advantage of the country's current unprecedented focus on health care quality improvement by engaging leaders from across the health care system to ensure that maternity care is provided in ways that are safe, effective, woman-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable. In collaboration with the Reforming States Group and the Milbank Memorial Fund, Childbirth Connection issued a major report, *Evidence-Based Maternity Care: What It Is and What It Can Achieve* (2008). The report assesses the present maternity care system and identifies barriers and opportunities for improvement. Through Childbirth Connection's landmark policy symposium, *Transforming Maternity Care: A High Value Proposition*, its *2020 Vision for a High Quality, High Value Maternity Care System*, and *Blueprint for Action*, the organization works to improve the structure, process and outcomes of maternity care in the 21st century. Childbirth Connection believes that deliberative, collaborative multi-stakeholder efforts to improve the quality, value and experience of care for women, babies, families, and other stakeholders are the way to get there. We know that maternity quality matters.

THE HISTORY

THE MILESTONES IN THIS TIMELINE REFLECT CHILDBIRTH CONNECTION'S CONTINUOUS COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF MATERNITY CARE.

1918 Founded Maternity Center Association (MCA) in New York City to conduct a demonstration project providing prenatal and postpartum care and education to underserved women and babies

Appointed Frances Perkins as Executive Secretary

1920 Established and operated 30 neighborhood maternity centers, which provided high quality care and education that significantly reduced maternal and infant death

Distributed *Maternity Center Handbook* to U.S. public and health agencies describing the model of maternity care demonstrated by MCA

1923 Appointed Hazel Corbin as General Director

1929 Offered Maternity Institutes across the U.S. to educate public health nurses on maternity care

1931 Established the first U.S. school of nurse-midwifery in New York City

Launched national Mother's Day public education campaign about importance of maternity care

1935 Revised organization's charter to extend its scope of work nationally and to other nations

1938 Developed and offered childbirth education classes for fathers across the country

1940 Sponsored exhibit of sculptures of the childbirth process by Robert Latou Dickinson and Abram Belskie at World's Fair; images of sculptures were published in the *Birth Atlas*, still in use throughout the world

1942 Published *Growing Uterus* anatomical charts and companion consumer education guide, still in use throughout the world

1947 Organized nationwide forums for public and professional audiences on prepared childbirth featuring Dr. Grantly Dick-Read, U.K. author of *Childbirth Without Fear*

1948 Supported Yale University evaluation of physiologic childbirth, showing favorable process, outcome and satisfaction results in over 1,000 women

1949 Collaborated with American Institute of Public Opinion on national survey of costs of maternity care

1954 Supported establishment of American College of Nurse-Midwifery, known today as American College of Nurse-Midwives

Produced and aired first national television series on childbearing with NBC-TV's *Home Show*

1958 Established first nurse-midwifery program at major municipal hospital, with move of MCA's midwifery school to Kings County Hospital, in a joint program with State University of New York

1959 Produced *From Generation to Generation*, the first major film on family life and sex education, which was nominated for an Academy Award

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1961 Held multi-disciplinary conference, *Meeting the Childbearing Needs of Families in a Changing World*, to address disparities in outcomes in both mothers and babies

1965 Appointed Vera Keane as General Director

1967 Published and nationally distributed consumer book, *A Baby is Born*, with English, French and Spanish captions, and a comic book for expectant parents, *Mrs. King Has a Baby*, in English and Spanish

1968 Held 50th anniversary seminar on the future of maternity care and published proceedings

1969 Appointed Ruth Watson Lubic as General Director

Held workshops on effective caregiver communication with underserved women and teens, and the need for increased consumer participation in health facility planning and operations

1970 Received Commonwealth Fund grant to increase access to nurse-midwifery care in the U.S. through refresher programs and scholarships to help midwives update skills and become certified

1975 Established The Childbearing Center in New York City to demonstrate the safety and satisfaction of out-of-hospital family-centered maternity care, obtained New York State Department of Health approval, and operated it through June 1996

1979 Developed innovative classes to prepare children for the birth of a sibling

1983 Established the National Association of Childbearing Centers, a professional association for out-of-hospital birth centers now known as American Association of Birth Centers

1985 Established the Commission for the Accreditation of Freestanding Birth Centers to ensure high standards of operation for out-of-hospital birth centers across the U.S.

1988 Opened the Childbearing Center of Morris Heights, a neighborhood-based birth center in the South Bronx serving low-income families

1989 Disseminated results of the National Birth Center Study of outcomes of care in 84 out-of-hospital birth centers, which was published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*; study concluded that care in birth centers was safe, satisfying, and cost effective

1993 Held 75th Anniversary seminar on mainstreaming the out-of-hospital birth center and published proceedings

1995 Appointed Maureen P. Corry as Executive Director

1996 Transferred ownership and operation of MCA's Childbearing Center to Saint Vincent Hospital, New York City

1997 Held national conference, *Models of Collaborative Practice: Preparing for Maternity Care in the 21st Century* and published proceedings in *Women's Health Issues*

Established Carola Warburg Rothschild Award for outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of women and families, and honored Ruth Lubic and Alice Ilichman with the award

Developed and published *The Rights of Childbearing Women*

1998 Held *Having A Baby in America* forum to celebrate MCA's 80th anniversary

Honored Bylye Avery and Jo Ivey Bouffard with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award

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Launched national long-term *Maternity Wise* program to promote evidence-based maternity care through research, education and advocacy

Commissioned systematic reviews to clarify the safety and effectiveness of labor pain relief methods

Surveyed national maternity care organizations about their involvement with evidence-based maternity care

Began to sponsor North American branch of Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth Group's Consumer Panel, which involves consumers in pre-publication refereeing of Cochrane systematic reviews and review updates

Jointly sponsored national multi-disciplinary symposium, *The Nature and Management of Labor Pain*, with New York Academy of Medicine

Launched *MaternityWise* website, www.maternitywise.org

Honored Iain Chalmers, Murray Enkin, and Marc Keirse with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award

Received Lamaze International Research Award for labor pain symposium

Sponsored special issue of *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* on "The Nature and Management of Labor Pain"

Carried out, with Harris Interactive, and reported *Listening to Mothers: The First National U.S. Survey of Women's Childbearing Experiences*

Provided full text online version of *A Guide to Effective Care in Pregnancy and Childbirth*, the Cochrane Pregnancy and Childbirth Review Group's acclaimed evidence summary

Held forum, *Trauma, Loss and Communal Grieving: The Experiences of Pregnant Women, New Mothers and Maternity Care Providers after 9/11*

Honored Penny Simkin with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award

Inaugurated quarterly column "Current Resources for Evidence-Based Practice" in *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing* and *Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health*, which continues to present

Co-authored influential Cochrane review, *Continuous Support for Women During Childbirth*

Established National Media Advisory Council

Honored John Kennell and Marshall Klaus with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award

Honored Kitty Ernst with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award at 85th anniversary gala

Received Doulas of North America Research Award for *Listening to Mothers* survey

Conducted systematic review comparing harms of cesarean and vaginal birth to women and babies

Launched *Cesarean Alert Initiative* to raise awareness about concerns with rising cesarean section rate

Issued consumer booklet, *What Every Pregnant Woman Needs to Know About Cesarean Section*, which has been endorsed by over 30 organizations

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THE FUTURE

CHILDBIRTH CONNECTION WILL CONTINUE TO BE A VOICE FOR THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF WOMEN, BABIES, AND FAMILIES.

<p>Changed name from Maternity Center Association to Childbirth Connection to better reflect contemporary focus</p> <p>Launched redesigned and expanded website, www.childbirthconnection.org</p> <p>Honored Doris Haire with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award</p>	<p>Carried out, with Harris Interactive, and reported <i>Listening to Mothers II</i>, national survey of women's childbearing experiences, and conducted postpartum follow-up survey</p> <p>Expanded mission statement: to improve the quality of maternity care through research, education, advocacy and policy</p> <p>Inaugurated annual column, "Letter from North America," in journal <i>Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care</i></p> <p>Received WebAwards for Health Care Standard of Excellence and Non-Profit Standard of Excellence</p> <p>Received World Wide Web Health Award</p>	<p>Held Capitol Hill briefing, <i>Health Care for Pregnancy and Childbirth</i>, sponsored by Congressional Women's Caucus</p> <p>Conducted key informant interviews with national health quality and policy leaders to plan strategy for policy work</p> <p>Convened multi-disciplinary Steering Committee to plan and carry out <i>Transforming Maternity Care</i> symposium and follow-on work</p> <p>Launched <i>Maternity Quality Matters Initiative</i> focusing on policy as a core strategy for maternity care quality improvement</p> <p>Honored Betsy Gotbaum and Choices in Childbirth with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award</p> <p>Received DONA International Research Award for <i>Listening to Mothers II</i> survey</p> <p>Received <i>Fit Pregnancy</i> Conscious Pregnancy and Parenting Award</p>	<p>Published <i>New Mothers Speak Out</i>, national <i>Listening to Mothers II</i> survey report of postpartum experiences</p> <p>Authored and issued <i>Evidence-Based Maternity Care: What It Is and What It Can Achieve</i>, with Reforming States Group and Milbank Memorial Fund</p> <p>Co-Chaired National Quality Forum (NQF) Perinatal Care Steering Committee to recommend national performance measures for NQF endorsement</p> <p>Convened multi-disciplinary team to develop <i>2020 Vision for a High Quality, High Value Maternity Care System</i></p> <p>Convened five stakeholder workgroups to identify priority sector-specific strategies for moving toward 2020 vision</p> <p>Issued <i>Health Care Reform Priorities for High Quality, High Value Maternity Care</i></p> <p>Honored Donna Lynne with Carola Warburg Rothschild Award</p>	<p>Convened 90th anniversary symposium, <i>Transforming Maternity Care: A High Value Proposition</i>, in Washington DC, to plan and foster rapid, concerted maternity care quality improvement initiatives with leaders from across the health system</p> <p>Commissioned systematic review on evidence for labor induction indications, published in <i>BJOG</i></p> <p>Presented inaugural Maternity Quality Matters Award to Seton Family of Hospitals</p> <p>Publish symposium proceedings, papers and <i>Blueprint for Action to Improve the Quality of Maternity Care in Women's Health Issues</i></p> <p>Establish public-private partnership to implement <i>Blueprint for Action</i></p>
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CHILDBIRTH
CONNECTION
since 1918

*Helping women and health professionals
make informed maternity care decisions*

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