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El Rio's Birth & Women's Health Center Part of National Study that Shows Midwife-Led Birth Centers Improve Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs

Birth Center Use Reduces Cesarean Rates, Lowers Health Costs for Women in Tucson

Tucson, Arizona - A landmark study of more than 15,000 births across the country, *The National Birth Center Study II*, reports that midwife-led birth center care, like the care provided at El Rio's Birth & Women's Health Center, is a viable solution to the rising need for higher quality, cost-efficient maternity care in Arizona and around the US.

The model of birth center care is linked to impressive outcomes, including a cesarean rate of just 6%, well below the current state average of over 30%. The study also suggests that midwife-led birth center care could significantly drive down costs for health care consumers. For just the 15,000 women included in this study, 3,000 unnecessary cesarean sections were avoided, saving payers over \$4.5 million and hospital facility fees of over \$20,000 for a normal vaginal birth were reduced to less than \$3,000 when taking place in a birth center. If even 10% of the approximately 4 million US births each year occurred in birth centers, the potential savings in facility service fees could reach \$1 billion per year.

The National Birth Center Study II was conducted by the American Association of Birth Centers and appears in the January/February 2013 issue of the American College of Nurse-Midwives' peer-reviewed journal, the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*.

The certified nurse-midwives at El Rio provide well-woman's care, prenatal care and deliver babies. Families who come to the Birth and Women's Health Center choose between Tucson Medical Center or the Birth Center's home-like facility for the birth of their child. El Rio's Birth and Women's Health Center is accredited by both the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers and The Joint Commission.

El Rio's Birth & Women's Health Center is considered one of the founding members of the American Association of Birth Centers and is the only facility in Tucson offering water-births. In general community birth centers are known for innovative programs, such as the centering pregnancy group prenatal care offered at the facility. Birth centers are recognized for their outstanding maternity and newborn outcomes.

To learn more about the birth center and midwifery services at El Rio Community Health Center log on to www.birthcenters.org or www.elrio.org for more information.

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El Rio Community Health Center is the largest provider of medical and dental services to uninsured and Medicaid populations in Pima County, Arizona. With 17 sites in Tucson, El Rio served the medical and dental needs of more than 76,000 patients in 2012. El Rio currently employs over 800 people with an annual budget of \$90 million dollars. A national model of health care excellence, El Rio's mission is to: "Improve the health of our community through comprehensive, accessible, affordable, quality and compassionate care." El Rio has been accredited and recognized by the Joint Commission and National Committee of Quality Assurance.
www.elrio.org.