

Understanding the Increase of Cesareans in the United States

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Current Status & Statistical Trends

In the U.S. the cesarean rate has risen 60%, since 1996. In 2011, one in three women gave birth by cesarean, which is roughly 32.8%.²
 In 2013, Kentucky was ranked the fifth highest state performing cesareans at a rate of 36.6%.²
 Currently 60% of cesareans are primary cesareans.²
 As stated by, the World Health Organization, "once the cesarean rate of 15% has been surpassed, the increased rate of cesareans has no additional benefit for mother and child and the outcomes do not improve."³
 Driving forces for high cesarean rates include profit pressures from hospitals and insurance companies and the malpractice environment for physicians.³

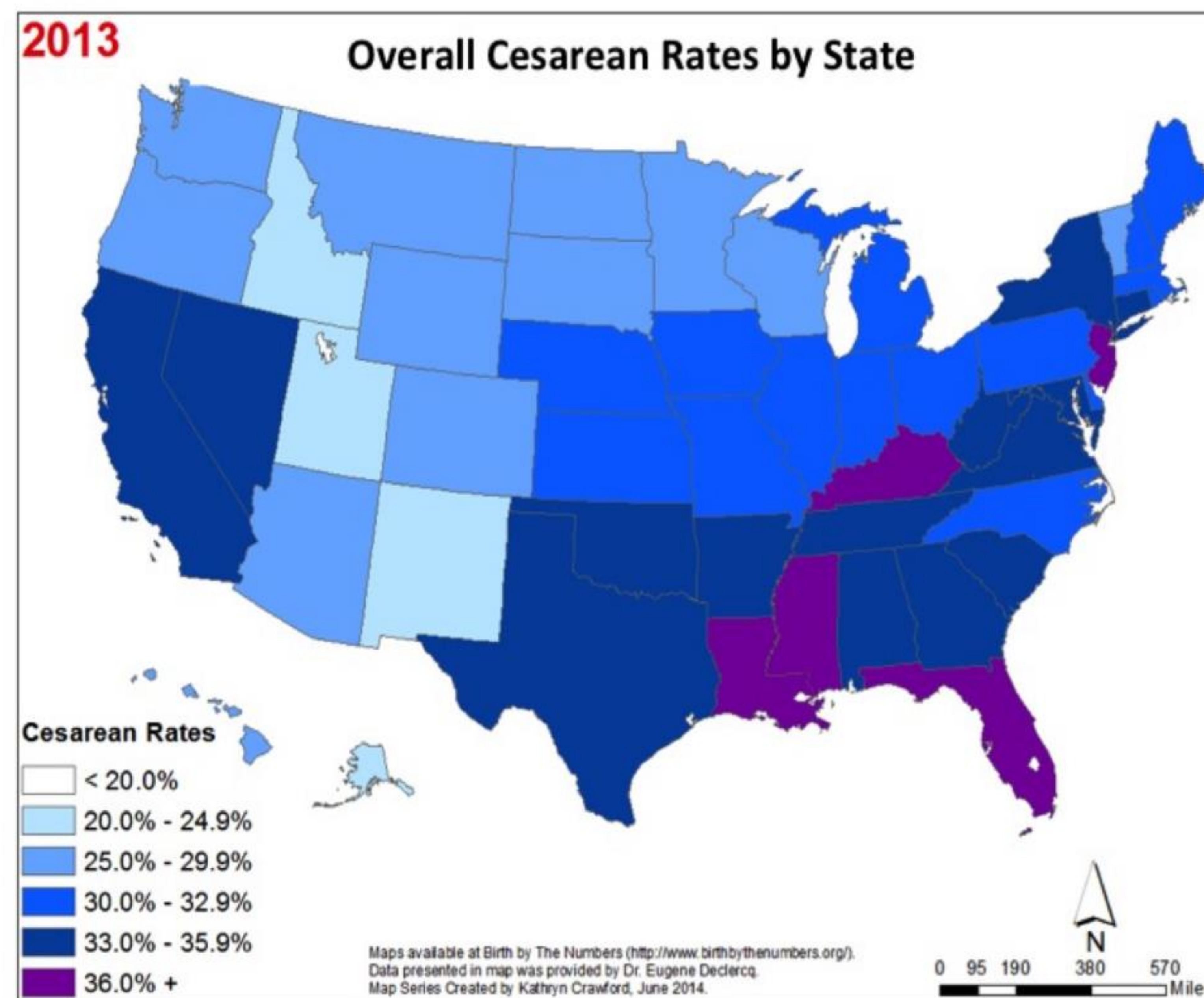
Background

A cesarean birth occurs through a six inch incision in the abdominal wall and uterus rather than through the vagina. A cesarean is considered major abdominal surgery and takes a longer recovery time versus vaginal delivery.³
 Cesarean delivery is utilized as a lifesaving operation when it is undertaken to deliver breech births or in cases where the mother has a life threatening medical condition.³
 An elective cesarean is classified as primary pre-labor cesarean delivery on maternal request in the absence of any maternal or fetal indications.³

Policies Addressing the Issue

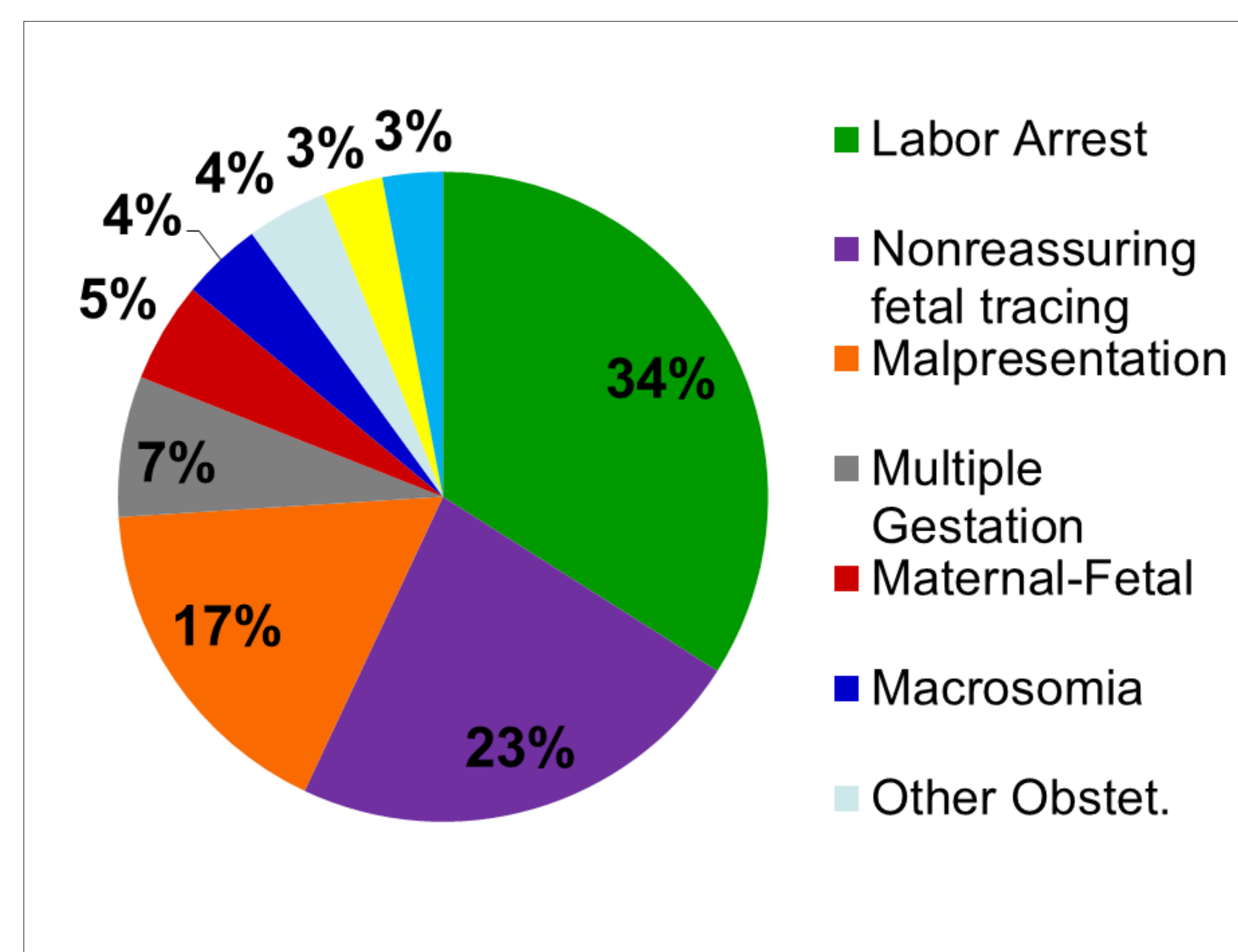
- As of 2014, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists implemented a new set of guidelines to decrease the rate of cesareans:⁴
 - Allowing prolonged latent (early) phase labor; Considering cervical dilation of 6 cm (instead of 4cm).⁴
 - Allowing more time for labor to progress in the active phase.⁴
 - Allowing women to push for at least two hours if they have delivered before, three hours if it's their first delivery, and even longer in some situations.⁴
 - Using techniques to assist with vaginal delivery, which is the preferred method when possible.⁴
 - The motivation behind these guidelines is to encourage physicians and other organizations to advocate for policy changes that affect the rate of primary cesarean delivery.⁴

Data (tables, charts, etc.)



Source: Birth by the Numbers, 2013.

Leading Indicators for Cesareans



Source: Birth by the Numbers, 2013.

Recommendations & Future Solutions

Educating and advocating for providers to review a hospital's policy regarding cesareans and what is defined as medically necessary intervention.³
 Providing childbirth education classes; exploring stages of labor, what to expect when you're expecting, breastfeeding education, and overall learning more about the birthing process.³
 Educating and bringing awareness to women about labor and delivery.³

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