# U.S. States That Support Midwives Have Better Birth Outcomes

States with laws which make it easier for midwives to care for pregnant women and deliver infants may have better birth outcomes than states where it is tougher for midwives to provide care, a recent study indicates.

Researchers ranked each state on how easy it is for midwives to practice and collaborate with obstetricians and other providers. Scores ranged from a low of 17 from North Carolina out of 100 points, to a high of 61 in Washington. Higher scores were associated with a considerably higher proportion of babies delivered by midwives, more spontaneous vaginal deliveries, and greater rates of breastfeeding. Higher scores correlated to underweight newborns with fewer preterm births and less frequent surgical cesarean section deliveries.

> *The question is not whether it is better to have a midwife or a doctor, but the degree to which midwives and doctors are able to work together to provide the best care utilizing all of their expertise and abilities,” Vedam stated to Reuters via email.*

**Related Reading: *10 Circumcision Myths – Let’s Get the Facts Straight***

Roughly eight in 10 U.S. births were handled by physicians in 2015, while roughly 9 percent have been attended by certified nurse midwives with advanced training or other midwives, researchers notice in PLoS One.

Certified nurse midwives may get accredited in all 50 states and may offer well-woman gynecology and primary care in addition to pregnancy care.

To evaluate how simple it is to allow midwives to take care of girls, researchers evaluated licensing demands, any constraints on which sort of maintenance midwives can supply or where they could practice, any prerequisites for midwives to consult doctors or refer patients to physicians for specific conditions, any legislation regulating quality and security of births in hospitals in addition to at birthing facilities or at home, and some other laws regulating if midwives could write prescriptions.

**Related Reading: *Considering Home Birth***

States with greatest scores had licensing demands for various kinds of midwives and gave midwives the maximum ability to take care of girls in various configurations, write prescriptions and get payments from Medicaid, the U.S. health insurance plan for the poor.

States in the Northeast, Pacific Northwest and Southwest had the maximum density of midwives, as quantified by the number of midwives practicing for every 1,000 births.

**Related Reading: *How Healthy is the United States Compared to Other Countries?***

States from the South had the lowest scores for midwifery policies, and these countries also had the greatest levels of premature births, underweight infants, and infant mortality, the analysis found.

The analysis was not a controlled experiment designed to establish whether midwives may mean better birth outcomes or the way specific state policies regulating midwives may lead to greater health for mothers or infants.

Since scientists looked whatsoever policies collectively, the analysis also could not shed light on which impact individual coverages concerning midwife practice could mean for birth results, the authors note. Nevertheless, the findings increase

the evidence that birth results might be better compared to midwives perform much more deliveries, ” explained Erin Wright, a researcher at Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in Baltimore who was not involved in the analysis.

In many other nations midwives manage 50 to 70 percent of births according to Wright.

**Related Reading:**

- *SIDS and SUID*
- *Galactagogues Foods, Herbs, and other Ways to Increase Breast Milk Production*
- *How Healthy is the United States Compared to Other Countries?*
- *Drinking One Soda Per Day Can Decrease Fertility By 33%, Study Finds*