Seton Family staff identified three high-risk elements of labor and delivery at their facilities: inappropriate use of vacuum or forceps; inappropriate use of Oxytocin; and inappropriate induction of labor. New protocols and policies were instituted, including “no vacuum delivery prior to 36 weeks gestation,” “no more than three pop-offs for vacuum delivery,” “no combined usage of vacuum and forceps,” and “no elective induction prior to 39 weeks gestation.”

Achievements

- Reduced birth trauma rate by 93 percent, to 0.02 percent in 2006, from 0.3 percent for 2001-2003.
- Decreased prematurity rate to 0.16 percent in 2004-2006 from 0.25 percent in 2001-2003.
- Reduced instrumented delivery rate to 4.7 percent in 2004-2006 from 7.4 percent in 2001-2003.
- Reduced elective labor inductions prior to 39 weeks of gestational age to 0 by October 2005, down from 3.2 percent.

Although birth trauma happens infrequently, it is emotionally devastating to families of affected children. The long term cost to providers, families and society is reflected in litigation costs. For 2001-2003, the four hospitals of Seton Family of Hospitals had a combined birth trauma rate of three per 1,000 deliveries or 29 birth injuries. This compares to the national birth trauma rate of approximately seven per 1,000 deliveries. The goal of this initiative was to create or recreate clinical processes that would be medically sound, reflect best practice, and generate positive and reproducible outcomes in the effort to eliminate preventable injury and death to neonates.