SSM St. Mary’s Hospital - St. Louis was recognized by Consumer Reports in 2017 for having the second lowest c-section rate in the country for first-time, low-risk mothers, at 12.3%.

Since that time we have been tracking the NTSV C/S rate and have observed an upward trend.

The 2019 average NTSV C/S rate was 20.15%, but has been followed by 26.27% in Q1 2020 and 23.65% in Q2 2020. The month-to-month rate has fluctuated as much as 8.4 percentage points, which is equivalent to an almost 29% variation.

We began tracking delivery stats comparing NTSV mothers delivering vaginally to those delivering by C/S.

Variables of particular interest to our project include mother’s age, gestational age, reason for admission, time from rupture to delivery, admitting provider, delivery provider, delivery staff, reason for C/S, indication for operative vaginal delivery, and maternal race.

We have so far collected two months of data, which is insufficient to detect trends yet.

The multidisciplinary PVB Team will continue to review the data at monthly meetings to determine direction for our quality improvement measures.

If our data reveals specific trends, we will implement PDSA cycles to test small changes in practice.

In the meantime, we are moving forward with staff and provider education to improve labor support beginning with positioning alternatives (use of peanut ball, birthing stool) and promoting movement.

In addition we are implementing scheduled provider/nurse communication to discuss patients’ progress and plan of care decisions. These will occur once per shift in a Core Team meeting, and two additional mini-huddles per shift between the charge nurse and Chief Resident.