

“Despite its growth, the study indicates midwifery care is not reaching enough women in target groups such as poor, teenage, socially isolated, and other at-risk mothers,” says Heaman.

Some other aspects of birth do stand out when compared to national averages.

“Cesarean births rose slightly over the study period but there is an element of good news for Manitoba,” says Heaman. Compared to the Canadian rate of about 28 per cent, Manitoba had a much lower rate of cesarean birth at approximately 20 per cent in 2008/09. This lower rate is more in keeping with international guidelines. Additionally, rates of vaginal births for women in Manitoba who had a previous cesarean birth (known as vaginal birth after cesarean or VBAC) remained relatively high.

Generally, women in Manitoba don’t wait as long to have children compared to women throughout Canada. Although there is a national trend toward delayed childbearing, less than three per cent of women in Manitoba had their first child at age 35 or older.

MCHP is a research unit in the Department of Community Health Sciences in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. Research scientists and their collaborators at MCHP study health services, population and public health, and the social determinants of health using data from the entire population of Manitoba. Most of the research answers questions of interest to policy makers based on a formal association with Manitoba Health and input from other government departments.

Media note: Dr. Maureen Heaman is available for interviews.

For more information, please contact Jack Rach, communications officer, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, at: 204-789-3669.

The summary and full report will be available for download on November 1 from <http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/deliverablesList.html>