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November 27, 2011

Date

BIRTHING QUALITY:
A GRANT PROPOSAL
FOR A
GROUNDED THEORY STUDY
OF
CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

BY

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M.P.H, Emory University, 2011
Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago, 1988
M.S.N., University of Texas at Austin, 1978
B.S.N., University of Texas at Austin, 1975

Robert Osburne, M.D, M.P.H., Committee Chair

An abstract of
A Grant Proposal submitted to the Faculty of the
Rollins School of Public Health of Emory University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Public Health in the Career MPH Program
2011

Abstract

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The overarching purpose of this research project is to develop a theory of how clinical excellence is generated and maintained in a Birth Center long recognized for its quality of care and excellent outcomes, specifically their low cesarean section rate. The proposed research is, in essence, seeking to “deconstruct” or “reverse engineer” the successful system at Sutter Davis Hospital in Davis, California. The specific outcome of interest in this study is the primary cesarean section rate – that is, the proportion of live births delivered by Cesarean section to mothers with no previous history of a Cesarean section, since a cesarean section represents failure to achieve a “normal, i.e., physiologic” birth. The ultimate goal is to understand the system, its context and contributors with the hope that this knowledge could be applied in other sites; and by so doing provide an opportunity to make major inroads into the “cesarean epidemic” that is impairing the short- and long-term health of women and babies, and unnecessarily depleting the scarce resources of the American medical system.

The proposed project is a case study of the Sutter Davis Midwifery Service (SDH), which is comprised of a public and private arm, both of which have contractual back-up from the same five obstetricians. In this study the whole “service” is considered the case. This will be a “key informant” study, although the definition of key informant will be very broad. The time required to do the study, as indicated in the timetable below, is a reflection of the large number of interviews anticipated.

The grounded theory analysis will be done using the constant comparative method in the computer program MAXQDA.

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