All families deserve the right to start or grow their family with dignity by accessing safe, supportive, and empowering childbirth care.
**OUR MISSION**

We design, test, and spread solutions that enable all expecting families and those who care for them to make decisions together in ways that are proven to be feasible to implement, effective at improving wellbeing, and financially sustainable.

**DELIVERY DECISIONS INITIATIVE**

The Delivery Decisions Initiative at Ariadne Labs envisions a world where every person can start or grow their family with dignity by accessing childbirth care that is safe, supportive, and empowering. Led by Harvard Medical School Professor and obstetrician Neel Shah, the Delivery Decisions Initiative is a bold effort to transform childbirth care around the world. By meticulously gathering and analyzing data and working with a broad group of diverse stakeholders to implement solutions on the ground, the team is developing solutions that empower women and redefine standards of care.

**OUR INNOVATIONS**

**Team Birth Project:** With a simple white board in every laboring woman’s room and a series of “huddles” with the woman and her care team, we are testing a novel approach to improving the safety and experience of care that can be applied to the care of every woman in every childbirth setting.

**Childbirth Facility Design and Management:** Working with hospitals across the United States to analyze hundreds of thousands of births, we gathered early evidence that facility design and management can have independent impact on childbirth outcomes. In partnership with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Facility Guidelines Institute, we are developing a set of best practices and recommendations to guide the design of childbirth facilities.

**Childbirth Cities:** In collaboration with a wide set of partners, we are defining the role of cities as critical platforms of social support for pregnant women and parents of newborn infants.

**Digital Engagement:** Working with Ovia Health, we are using mobile technology and transparent health care quality data to help women make decisions about where to receive care.

**Advocacy:** Through international media outreach, presentations on global stages such as FIGO, Women Deliver and RCOG, and in partnership with the non-profit March for Moms, we are building coalitions and advocating for change that supports the wellbeing of mothers.
IDEAS
Our ideas aim to frame the challenges faced by all people who are trying to start or grow their families and shed light on novel solutions.

TOOLS
Our tools aim to improve care for every woman, everywhere by promoting teamwork, communication and best practices in clinical decision-making.

COMMUNITY
Our community includes a broad coalition of stakeholders around the world committed to improving maternal health outcomes and supporting women’s preferences in childbirth care.

THE CHALLENGE WE FACE IN MATERNAL HEALTH
Women and newborns can be harmed in two ways during childbirth: from too much care too soon, and too little care too late. In some places, women do not receive even the most basic care, placing them at grave risk for complications and death. In other places, women are receiving medically unnecessary cesarean sections, a problem of overtreatment that is equally dangerous to women’s health. In all cases, the system fails to deliver appropriate care for women, even when clinicians are well intentioned and well informed. To transform the systemic barriers, we need new approaches and solutions to childbirth care that promote quality, dignity and equity.

Kim Dever, MD, and Tufts medical student Justin Owumi listen as Courtney McDunough discusses early labor at South Shore Hospital in Massachusetts, where the Team Birth Project is being implemented. Photo by Ana M. Reyes.
TEAM BIRTH PROJECT

The centerpiece of the Delivery Decisions Initiative, the Team Birth Project is a groundbreaking approach to clinical care that aims to overcome the systemic barriers that prevent clinicians from making reliable, consistent decisions that support women’s preferences. The systems-level tools, training and implementation strategies are designed to foster teamwork, communication, and empowerment of women and families with the aim of reducing overtreatment and ensuring every woman receives appropriate care.

The childbirth team can include nurses, midwives, obstetricians, the birthing woman and her family, anesthesiologists, neonatologists, doulas and other specialists. Each member of the team has access to different information regarding what is happening during labor. Nonetheless, there is currently no well-defined process to make sure that every member of her team is considering the same information at the same time, with a shared mental model when important labor management decisions need to be made.

Following four years of research and a one-year design effort involving experts from across disciplines, we identified behaviors that we believe enable high performing teams to take the best possible care of women in labor. The Team Birth Project’s tools support these behaviors and operationalize best practices in communication and clinical care.

ADMISSION DECISION AID
This one-page tool is intended to be used primarily by the triaging clinician to prevent premature admission of laboring women to a labor and delivery bed.

LABOR AND BIRTH PLANNING BOARD
This is a patient-facing whiteboard located in all labor and delivery rooms to collate shared information from team huddles and act as an ongoing shared reference for all team members.

DELIVERY DECISION AID
A one-page tool to improve decision accuracy about whether to deliver a baby via cesarean or operative vaginal delivery. The tool is used by the labor nurse and delivering provider in front of the laboring woman when considering an operative delivery.
TEAM BIRTH PROJECT LAUNCH

The Delivery Decisions team is currently piloting the Team Birth Project with hundreds of clinicians and tens of thousands of patients at four community hospitals across three geographies in the United States.

» South Shore Hospital, Massachusetts

» St. Francis Hospital, Oklahoma

» Overlake Hospital, Washington

» Evergreen Hospital, Washington
ABOUT US

A joint center of Brigham and Women’s Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Ariadne Labs is a global leader in health systems innovation. Our mission is to save lives and reduce suffering by creating scalable solutions that improve health care delivery at the most critical moments for people everywhere.

DELIVERY DECISIONS LEADERSHIP

Neel Shah, MD, MPP, is Assistant Professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Biology at Harvard Medical School, and director of the Delivery Decisions Initiative at Ariadne Labs. His team is currently collaborating with hospitals across the United States, and using methods from design, systems engineering, and management to reduce the epidemic of avoidable c-sections. Neel earned joint degrees in medicine and public policy from Brown University and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He completed residency at Brigham & Women’s Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DELIVERY DECISIONS INITIATIVE

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