

# HOSPITAL OBSTETRICAL CAPACITY IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

A comparison of the obstetric occupancy rates and hospital births for years 1996-1997 and 2010-2011, for each of the five counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania.



2000 Hamilton St  
Suite 205  
Philadelphia, PA 19130  
215-972-0700  
215-972-8266 Fax  
[www.maternitycarecoalition.org](http://www.maternitycarecoalition.org)

## Quick Profile

✓ Number of Births Per Year

Hospital Births: 19,743

Resident Births: 23,091

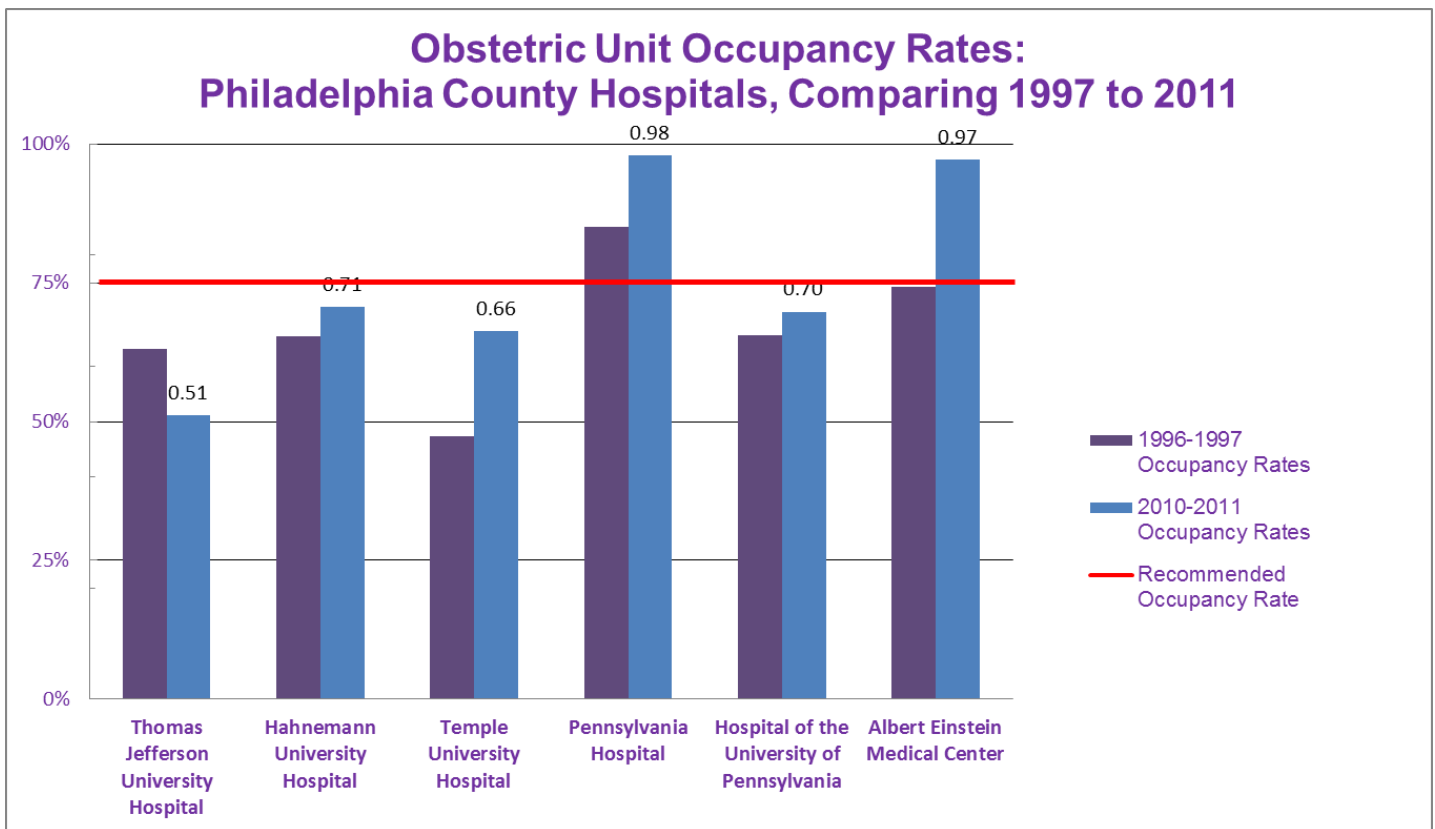
✓ Medicaid Pays for :

42.7% of births

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Birth Statistics (2010)

## Philadelphia County: Obstetric Occupancy Rates & Hospital Births

From 1997 until 2009, the number of birthing hospitals was reduced from 19 to six to accommodate the city's 23,091 annual resident births. As seen in the table below, two of Philadelphia's six remaining birthing hospitals are over the recommended occupancy rates<sup>1</sup> for obstetrics.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health Statistics, Health Facilities Hospital Report (1996-1997, 2010-2011)

<sup>1</sup> See page six for references on recommended obstetric occupancy rates.

## Quick Profile

✓ **Number of Births Per Year**

**Hospital Births: 14,346**

**Resident Births: 9,107**

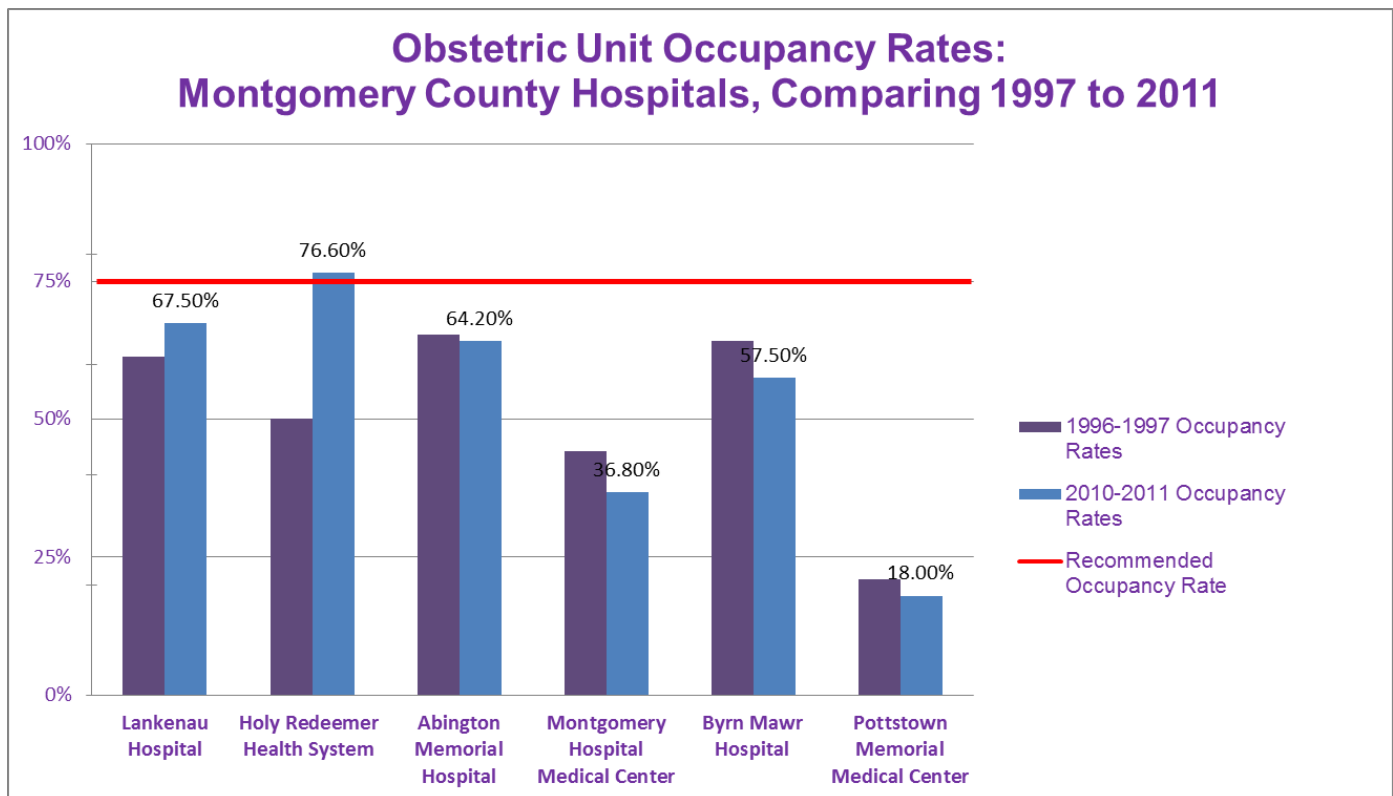
✓ **Medicaid Pays for :**

**12.6%**

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Birth Statistics (2010)

## Montgomery County: Obstetric Occupancy Rates & Hospital Births

Since 2001, the number of birthing hospitals in Montgomery County was reduced from nine to six, with Central Montgomery Medical Center in Lansdale and Mercy Suburban hospital in Norristown closing in the past few years. As displayed in the graph below, Holy Redeemer is currently the only hospital operating at above recommended occupancy levels.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health Statistics, Health Facilities Hospital Report (1996-1997, 2010-2011)

## Quick Profile

✓ **Number of Births Per Year**

Hospital Births: 4,377

Resident Births: 6,830

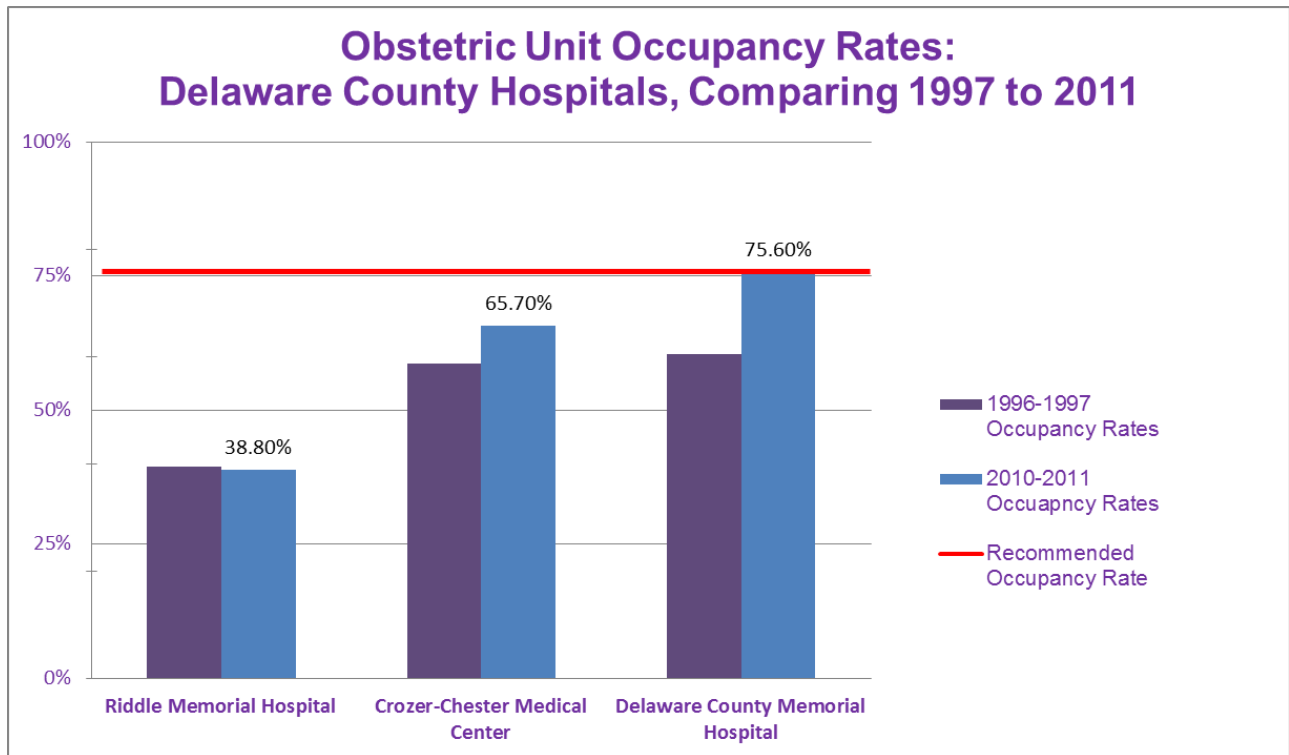
✓ **Medicaid Pays for :**

7%

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Birth Statistics (2010)

## Delaware County: Obstetric Occupancy Rates & Hospital Births

In Delaware County, Mercy Fitzgerald Maternity Unit closed in 2003, leaving three remaining birthing hospitals in the county. Delaware County Memorial Hospital is currently operating at 75.6% occupancy, the capacity threshold for obstetrics.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health Statistics, Health Facilities Hospital Report (1996-1997, 2010-2011)

## Quick Profile

✓ **Number of Births Per Year**

Hospital Births: 6,083

Resident Births: 5,513

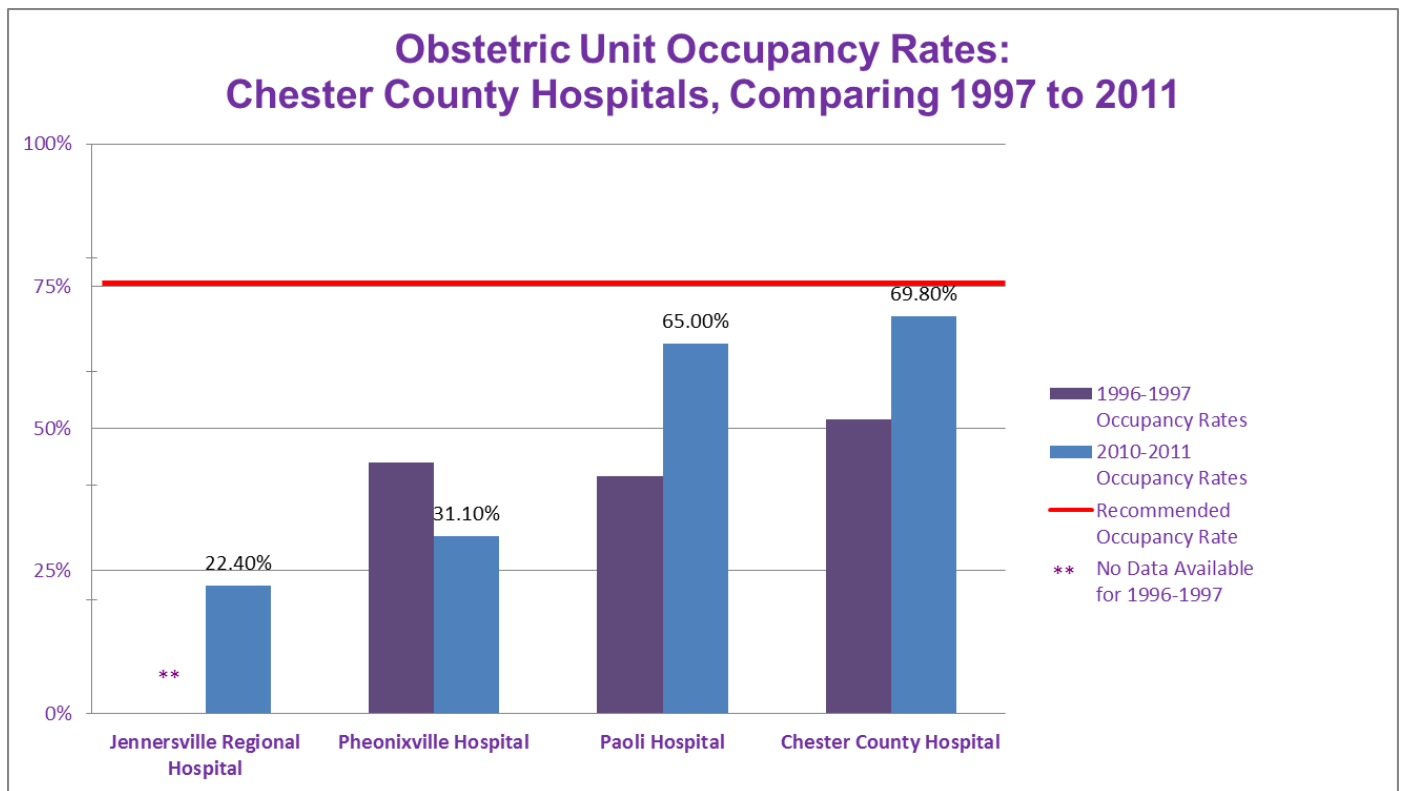
✓ **Medicaid: Pays for :**

**9.4%**

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Birth Statistics (2010)

## Chester County: Obstetric Occupancy Rates & Hospital Births

Brandywine Hospital closed in 2008, leaving four remaining birthing hospitals in Chester County. While none of the hospitals are currently operating at above recommended occupancy levels, Chester County Hospital is very close to the threshold at nearly 70% occupancy. In 2010-2011, The Chester County Hospital had 2,485 live births, or around 41% of all births in the county.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health Statistics, Health Facilities Hospital Report (1996-1997, 2010-2011)

## Quick Profile

✓ **Number of Births Per Year**

Hospital Births: 5,991

Resident Births: 5,779

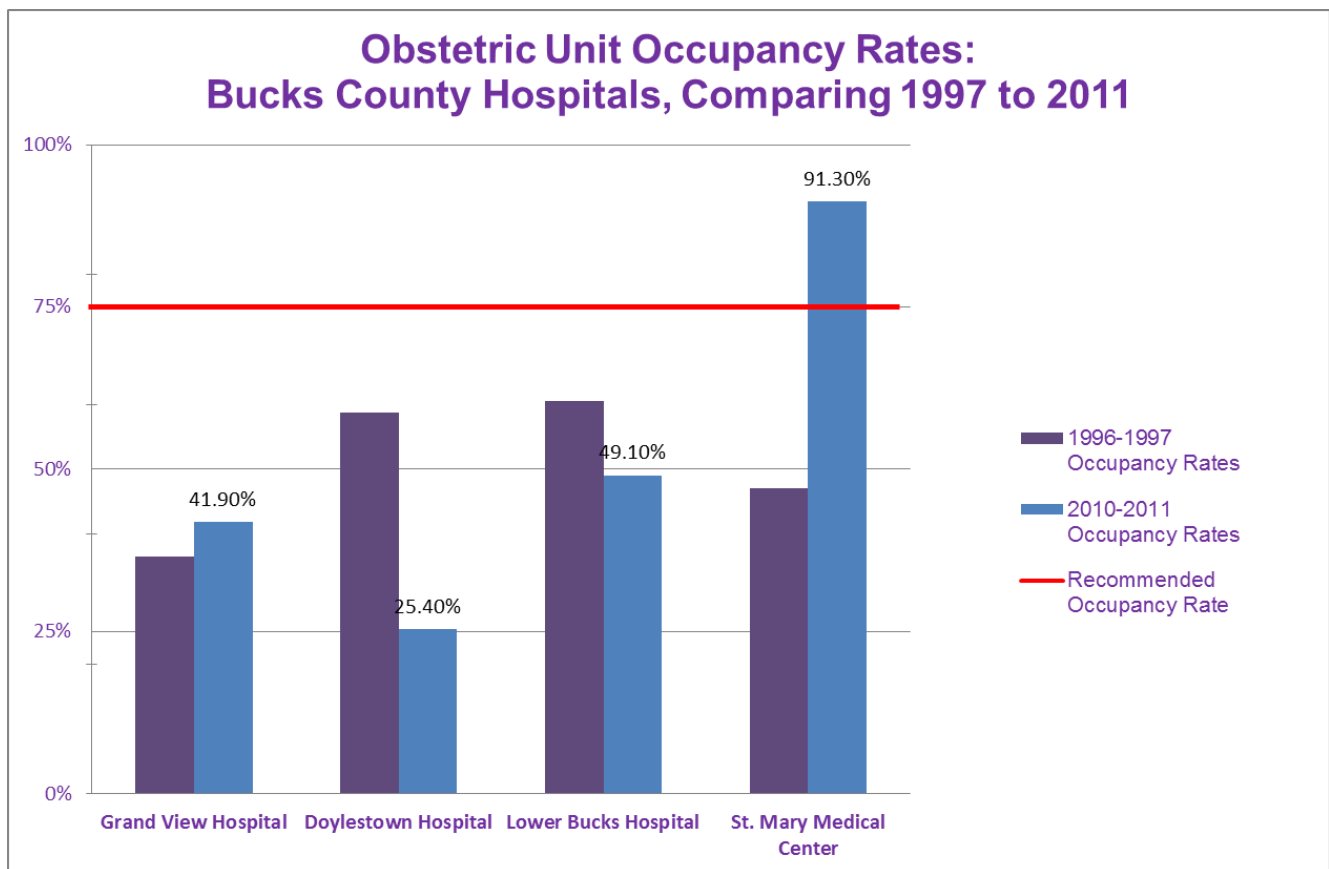
✓ **Medicaid Pays for :**

**18.04%**

Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health, Birth Statistics (2010)

## Bucks County: Obstetric Occupancy Rates & Hospital Births

Warminster Hospital closed in 2000, leaving four remaining birthing hospitals in Bucks County. St. Mary's Medical Center is experiencing the most acute capacity issues, at 91.30% occupancy for obstetrics.



Source: Pennsylvania Department of Health Statistics, Health Facilities Hospital Report (1996-1997, 2010-2011)

## Hospital Obstetrical Capacity (1996-2011)

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Capacity for maternity services is an area of concern for hospitals, practitioners, and families. The literature, discussed briefly below, recommends an obstetric unit occupancy rate of 75% and, in 2010-2011, five of the remaining 23 maternity units in Southeastern Pennsylvania were operating above this capacity; two at about 99%.

In order to evaluate the obstetrical capacity of the city in the aftermath of multiple maternity ward closures, in 2004 the Philadelphia Department of Public Health commissioned a Drexel University report, "Obstetric Care for Philadelphia Residents: 1997-2004." The following is an excerpt:

"Individual hospitals make their own determinations as to what occupancy level they are comfortable with, taking into account fiscal pressures, risk, and provider workload. Several states and organizations have published "ideal" obstetric occupancy rates, sometimes varying for urban and rural areas or small vs. large hospitals (Kolker)."

The graph below, referenced by Kolker, outlines standards for obstetric occupancy rates put forth by professional and public health entities such as the New York State Department of Health and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology.<sup>2</sup> Using these standards, this report compares occupancy rates in 1996-1997 and 2010-2011 for each birthing hospital in the five-county region, as well as the number of births<sup>3</sup> and licensed obstetrical beds at each facility.

<b>Table 1: Industry Recommendations for Obstetric Unit Occupancy Rate</b>	
<b>Source</b>	<b>Recommendation for obstetric occupancy</b>
<b>NY State Department of Health</b>	75% in an urban area
<b>Virginia (Certificate of Need)</b>	80%
<b>Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board</b>	75% for hospitals with 11-25 beds 78% for hospitals with 26 or more beds
<b>Department of Defense</b>	70%
<b>American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology</b>	75%
<b>NICU occupancy target</b>	75%

<sup>2</sup> See references here: [New York State Department of Health: Acute Care Facilities](#); [Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board \(03/21/2005\)](#); [Department of Defense Planning Criteria for Health Facilities](#); ["Strategies for Cutting Hospital Beds: The impact on patient services"](#)

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, "hospital births" is defined as the number of live births that occur within county hospitals, whereas "resident births" is defined as the number of live births by a resident in a given county zip code. A patient with a Philadelphia County domicile delivering in a Bucks County hospital, for example, would be counted in the number of Philadelphia live "resident births" and number of "live births" at the hospital of delivery in Bucks County.