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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Medicaid Agency Announces Use of Mobile Simulation Service to Help Educate Birthing Hospitals**  
50-foot vehicle delivers onsite training statewide to reduce non-medically necessary C-sections

**Columbia, SC** – The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) today announced the launch of a new mobile simulation training program to improve health outcomes for moms and babies in South Carolina through their South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative (SCBOI). This program will be focused on best practices to help reduce non-medically necessary C-sections in first-time, low-risk moms as part of the Supporting Vaginal Birth (SVB) initiative.

As part of the educational component of the SVB initiative, SCBOI, as part of a pilot program, provided mobile simulation education in late 2014 and early 2015 to labor and delivery nurses and physicians at five hospitals across the state through the SimCOACH™. Due to the overwhelming response of this program, SCDHHS initiated and signed a two-year, 1.1 million dollar agreement with Palmetto Health to provide simulation education to OB/GYN physicians and perinatal nurses at each of the 45 birthing hospitals in the state through the SimCOACH™, the first mobile simulation laboratory in South Carolina and one of only a few in the nation.

“Especially in rural areas of the state, limited resources can make it challenging for hospitals to purchase high-tech training equipment or to let staff participate in additional training off-site,” said BZ (Melanie) Giese, director of the South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative (SCBOI) for SCDHHS. “By partnering with the SimCOACH™, SCDHHS will be able to support mobile, clinical-based, hands on training at each of the hospitals, allowing all labor and delivery teams the valuable opportunity to learn best practices that will improve health outcomes for moms and babies in our state.”

During these day-long training programs, which are led by a maternal-fetal medicine specialist and the SimCOACH™ staff, hospital labor and delivery teams will participate in 90-minute sessions that will simulate best practices to reduce the risk of non-medically necessary C-sections. The training will also address other obstetric and neonatal emergencies.

“We are proud to partner with SCDHHS on the SCBOI program. The combination of high technology simulation and this critical public health initiative, delivered at sites across the state in our SimCOACH™, promises to have a huge impact on reducing unnecessary C-sections. This partnership will serve as a cutting edge model for future opportunities to improve the health of our citizens.”

Building on SCBOI's success of drastically reducing the non-medically necessary early elective deliveries in the state, the SVB initiative started in June 2014 when all South Carolina birthing hospitals signed a commitment to reduce non-medically necessary C-sections in first-time, low-risk moms. In addition to the simulation training, SCDHHS is working with SCBOI to provide webinars, peer to peer maternal-fetal medicine discussion and provider education to assist hospitals and health providers in their efforts to achieve this.

Since its inception in 2011, SCBOI has expanded efforts to reduce the number of low birth weight babies and ensure the healthiest possible start in life for all infants. SCBOI has worked with over 50 percent of the states in the nation to share South Carolina's experiences and successes.

SCDHHS through SCBOI is also working on other initiatives to improve the health and health care for pregnant women and infants in South Carolina. In 2012, the agency began incentivizing doctors through claims reimbursement to screen pregnant women for risk factors such as substance abuse, domestic violence and depression. In 2013, SCDHHS implemented CenteringPregnancy, a group model of prenatal care shown to decrease pre-term birth, and "Race to the Date," a program providing financial incentive payments to hospitals who achieved the certification of "Baby Friendly USA" by September 2013.

For more information on SCBOI, visit [www.scdhhs.gov/boi](http://www.scdhhs.gov/boi) or contact Monty Robertson at [Montrelle.Robertson@scdhhs.gov](mailto:Montrelle.Robertson@scdhhs.gov) or 803-898-3866 or BZ Giese at [GieseM@scdhhs.gov](mailto:GieseM@scdhhs.gov).

**About the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services**

*The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services provides health care benefits to more than one million South Carolinians. Its mission is to purchase the most health for our citizens in need at the least possible cost to the taxpayer.*

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