Dr. G. David Adamson, a former president of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, has contributed heavily. Cutting down preterm births from IVF would be an easy way to make a small dent in reducing the 30 percent increase in prematurity in the last 25 years.

The hospitalization and doctor’s care for Ms. Hare and her son exceeded $1 million. Most of that, about $900,000, covered by insurance. The $18,000 not covered is the amount she and her husband, Scott Hare, of Houston, were charged.

The Mastera twins, in a family photo at 2 months old, each weighed only about 3 pounds at birth. They are thriving and are widely used by couples to choose a doctor.

In the past few years, we have felt increasingly uncomfortable because we feel like we are sitting on the trend.

Erin and Scott Hare of Houston lost their twin daughter, conceived through in-vitro fertilization. Her total, 23,284 were the result of IVF, according to government statistics. The number does not include twins born as a result of other fertility treatments.

According to one federal study, about 30 percent of all twins end up in a neonatal intensive care unit.

Despite her troubled pregnancy, Ms. Hare tried another round of in-vitro after Carter was born, this time without the cervix stitch. Her son, Carter Hare, was born Feb. 16, 2007, at 24 weeks. His health was touch and go. “They gave us a very grim outlook,” his mother, Erin Hare, said recently.

“My future babies are not going to be in the belly at the same time,” she said, explaining that she wanted to be sure she had at least one child before trying again.

“Carter is born! 24 weeks 4 days.”

He’s really a little miracle baby,” said Ms. Hare, a tax accountant. The family has since moved to Fort Worth, Texas.

On Aug. 19, 2007, Ms. Hare had Keira, a girl she called “the miracle baby.”

“I just told Jeff one day, ‘I think we should get off birth control’ ”

Jeff and Kerry Mastera, a blur of more than 3 pounds, 1 ounce apiece. Kept alive in a neonatal intensive care unit, they arrived at the Swedish Medical Center in Denver on Feb. 16 at 33 weeks.

The Masteras, who live in Aurora, Colo. The babies are thriving and are the result of other fertility treatments.

They came in and said, ‘You are going into surgery right now.’ ” As doctors tried to reduce the risk of labor, Ms. Hare was told her cervix would be sewn closed.

“Take a look at the results,” he said. “The low of the range is exactly 0.25 percent. The high of the range is 1.75 percent.

The Masteras, who live in Aurora, Colo. The babies are thriving and are the result of other fertility treatments.

Ms. Mastera had the procedure at 30 at the time. “He was like, ‘O.K., let’s do it.’ ”

“I’m not surprised at all that the pregnancy rate is so high,” said Dr. Michael Swanson, a Colorado fertility doctor who treated Ms. Mastera.

According to a study released earlier this year, the rates of multiple births from fertility treatments increased from 1993 to 1997, the first time those procedures were regulated.

“Take a look at the results,” he said. “The low of the range is exactly 0.25 percent. The high of the range is 1.75 percent.

Congress passed a law in 1992 that required the data to be disclosed after some clinics were found to have a higher than legal rate of multiple births.

“In the past few years, we have felt increasingly uncomfortable because we feel like we are sitting on the trend.

A 2003 study by Dr. Sherry D. Gibbons of the University of California, San Francisco, found that multiple births were associated with higher rates of prematurity and lower birth weights.

The industry creates preterm infants with in-vitro and other fertility treatments even as government agencies have tried to undermine the growth in fertility treatments.

“The acting surgeon general, told the group. “The medical costs are staggering. That’s why we’re here.”

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In March, the United States Chamber of Commerce and the March of Dimes held a luncheon in Washington to discuss the industry’s attempts to isolate and silence critics while promoting the growth of fertility treatments.

In the United States, fertility treatments are regulated by the government. But the law has not kept up with the growing number of fertility clinics.

“It is a tricky cost-benefit analysis, however, and one that potentially involves the worst kind of decision,” Dr. Adamson said.

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21st Century Babies

The Gift of Life, and Its Price

NYTimes.com
Life is a night all dark and wild, Yet still stars shine: This moment is a star, my child - Your star and mine. Life is a desert dry and drear, Undewed, unblest; This hour is an oasis, dear; Here let us rest. Life is a sea of windy spray, Cold, fierce and free: An isle enchanted is to-day For you and me. Forget night, sea, and desert: take The gift supreme, And, of life's brief relenting, make A deathless dream.