Sources:
Choosing Wisely | An Initiative of the ABIM Foundation http://www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources/scheduling-early-delivery-of-your-baby/
The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists http://www.acog.org/Patients/FAQs/Elective-Delivery-Before-39-Weeks
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/vitalstats/VitalStats_Births.htm

Percent of early term babies delivered by C-section by county

Chautauqua 35.8%
Erie 35.5%
Monroe 31.4%
Broome 36.2%
Oneida 36.2%
Onondaga 31.9%
Ontario 24.0%
Jefferson 24.8%
Oswego 30.6%
St. Lawrence 47.3%
Niagara 46.4%

Leading medical societies participating in Choosing Wisely, an initiative of the ABIM Foundation, state that: “Most babies need 39 weeks to develop fully. Induced or planned delivery before that time – without valid medical reason – is not in the best interest of the baby or the mother.”

In upstate New York, 2/3 of all babies born in 2013 were full term, which means they were born at a gestational age of at least 39 weeks.

Early Elective Deliveries
Full-term babies are the healthiest babies. Although babies born between 27 weeks and 41 weeks are considered to be full-term babies, they are still growing. The baby's brain will grow almost a third of its total weight between weeks 35 and 39:

- 39-41 weeks: 60.2%
- 37-38 weeks: 22.6%
- 34-36 weeks: 7.4%
- <34 weeks: 3.4%
- 42+ weeks: 6.4%

Some babies need to be delivered early because the mother or baby is at risk for complications. If there are no complications, inducing labor or scheduling a C-section before 39 weeks should be avoided because the baby is still growing.

The odds of the baby being admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit are more than 60 percent higher in early term babies than full-term babies. The lungs may not be fully developed at 37 weeks and 38 weeks. The odds of an early term baby needing respiratory support are almost double that of a full-term baby.

During weeks 37 and 38, the baby may still be developing the ability to swallow and suck. Babies born at this time are at higher risk of having feeding problems.

Some of these babies were delivered by cesarean section, which puts them at an even higher risk for having respiratory problems and being admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit. In New York state, 35.4 percent of early term babies were born by cesarean section in 2013.