

PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign

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Physician Lobby Groups Propose “Model” Maternity Care Legislation That Would Deny U.S. Taxpayers Billions in Savings

Plan to Block Access to Certified Professional Midwives and Out-of-Hospital Birth Puts Mothers and Babies at Risk

CHICAGO (June 15, 2009)—At its annual meeting this week, the American Medical Association (AMA) will join the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) in reiterating their commitment to deny women access to Certified Professional Midwives and home birth. Both groups are developing “model” legislation to achieve this goal in all 50 states, putting mothers and babies at risk and stripping billions of dollars in savings from the health care system.

“Certified Professional Midwives are the only maternity care providers in the United States required to undergo specialized clinical training in out-of-hospital settings,” said Katherine Prown, PhD, Campaign Manager of The Big Push for Midwives. “Denying women access to maternity care providers with expertise in out-of-hospital delivery so that another group of providers can maintain its monopoly on the maternity care market is not only bad public health policy, it is fiscally irresponsible.”

[David A. Anderson](#), the Paul G. Blazer Professor of Economics at Centre College, calculates that if the rate of births that take place in private homes and freestanding birth centers increased by less than 10%, the United States would save more than \$9 billion in maternity care costs each year. A study commissioned by the State of Washington found more than \$3.1 million in savings each biennium to public and private insurers in the state through the utilization of midwives with specialized training in out-of-hospital deliveries.

“The medical industry realizes that Certified Professional Midwives and out-of-hospital birth are segments of the maternity care market that are poised for growth, especially now as we are looking to reform health care,” said Steff Hedenkamp, Director of Communications for The Big Push for Midwives. “The AMA and ACOG proposals are a smoke-screen, nothing more than a last-ditch attempt to squash the competition before Congress finalizes health care reform legislation in the coming weeks.”

Advocates for Certified Professional Midwives held a briefing on Capitol Hill last month that included a panel of experts in epidemiology, economics, public health, and maternity care, who presented research and data showing that women whose babies are delivered by Certified Professional Midwives experience significant reductions in preterm and low-birth weight—two of the leading causes of infant mortality—racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes, as well as the costs associated with long-term neonatal care.

“If Congress and the Administration are committed to real reform, they will look at the evidence instead of listening to medical industry lobbyists and realize that, when it comes to maternity care, Certified Professional Midwives can make a serious contribution to helping America reduce costs and improve outcomes at the same time,” said Prown.

The Big Push for Midwives Campaign represents thousands of grassroots advocates across the United States who support expanding access to out-of-hospital maternity care and the Certified Professional Midwives who are specially trained to provide it. The mission of The Big Push includes educating national policymakers about the reduced costs and improved outcomes associated with out-of-hospital birth settings and advocating for including the services of Certified Professional Midwives in health care reform. Media inquiries: Steff Hedenkamp (816) 506-4630, Steff@TheBigPushForMidwives.org.

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