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IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, January 12, 2009



NC HOUSE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS LICENSING MIDWIVES

Legislation Would Let NC Join 24 Other States in Advancing Healthcare Options

RALEIGH, NC — The NC House Select Committee on Licensing Midwives released a report last week calling on the state to license and regulate Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), who are trained as specialists in out-of-hospital maternity care. The Committee recommended that North Carolina join the growing number of states that have enacted laws to provide families who choose out-of-hospital delivery with access to highly-trained and legally-recognized maternity care providers.

“Each year, more North Carolina families choose out-of-hospital birth for religious, cultural, philosophical or financial reasons,” said Russ Fawcett, Legislative Chair for [North Carolina Friends of Midwives](#). “CPMs also care for a disproportionate number of rural, low-income and uninsured families. All families deserve safe and affordable maternity care, and the midwives who provide it deserve legal recognition. We applaud the Committee for recommending a much-needed and long-overdue reform in current law and policy.”

Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), who practice primarily in hospital settings, are licensed in all 50 states. Currently, there are no laws in North Carolina to regulate CPMs, who deliver babies in private homes and freestanding birth centers. Studies show that low-risk women who plan home births under the care of CPMs have outcomes equal to low-risk women who deliver in the hospital, but with far fewer costly and preventable interventions. A study commissioned by the Washington legislature found that during the last five years alone, the state’s licensed midwives saved taxpayers and private insurers more than \$10 million.

Rep. Ty Harrell serves on the Committee that is chaired by Rep. Bob England. “We’ve heard testimony from dozens of public health and policy experts. The facts are clear – it is time to license North Carolina’s midwives.”

“From both a cost and a safety standpoint, licensing midwives is an important public health issue,” said Henry Dorn, MD, a board certified OBGYN who practices in High Point. “The Certified Professional Midwife credential is the gold standard for midwives who specialize in out-of-hospital birth, and it is critical that we do all we can to ensure that women in our state have access to the safest care possible, including collaborative care with other providers when it becomes necessary.”

A positive recommendation from the House study committee paves the way for the full General Assembly to develop and enact legislation in the 2009 session that provides for the licensure and regulation CPMs.

North Carolina Friends of Midwives is a grassroots organization of midwifery advocates dedicated to promoting, supporting, and protecting midwifery in North Carolina. We advocate for the preservation of midwife-attended births, in accordance with the [Midwives Model of Care](#)[™] including those at home and in freestanding birth centers.

North Carolina is a priority of [The Big Push for Midwives Campaign](#) a nationally coordinated campaign to advocate for regulation and licensure of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and to push back against the attempts of the American Medical Association Scope of Practice Partnership to deny American families access to legal midwifery care. Through its work with state-level advocates, the Big Push is helping to build a new model of U.S. maternity care built on expanding access to out-of-hospital maternity care and CPMs, who provide affordable, quality, community-based care that is proven to reduce costly and preventable interventions as well as the rate of low-birth weight and premature births.

The Big Push Campaign Manager Katie Prown says, “The demand for safe and less-costly maternity care has been steadily increasing in recent years, as more people realize that we can no longer afford a system that produces inferior results at premium costs.”

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