

## PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign

CONTACT: Steff Hedenkamp, (816) 506-4630, [steff@thebigpushformidwives.org](mailto:steff@thebigpushformidwives.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Thursday, February 7, 2008



### **ACOG: Out of Touch with Needs of Childbearing Families**

Trade Union claims out-of-hospital birth is “trendy;”  
tries to play the “bad mother” card

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 7, 2008)—The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a trade union representing the financial and professional interests of obstetricians, has issued the latest in a series of statements condemning families who choose home birth and calling on policy makers to deny them access to Certified Professional Midwives. CPMs are trained as experts in out-of-hospital delivery and as specialists in risk assessment and preventative care.

“It will certainly come as news to the Amish and other groups in this country who have long chosen home birth that they’re simply being ‘trendy’ or ‘fashionable,’” said Katie Prown, PhD, Campaign Manager of The Big Push for Midwives 2008. “The fact is, families deliver their babies at home for a variety of very valid reasons, either because they’re exercising their religious freedom, following their cultural traditions or because of financial need. These families deserve access to safe, quality and affordable maternity care, just like everyone else.”

Besides referring to home birth as a fashionable “trend” and a “cause célèbre” that families choose out of ignorance, ACOG’s latest statement adds insult to injury by claiming that women delivering outside of the hospital are bad mothers who value the childbirth “experience” over the safety of their babies.

“ACOG has it backwards,” said Steff Hedenkamp, Communications Coordinator of The Big Push and the mother of two children born at home. “I delivered my babies with a trained, skilled professional midwife because I wanted the safest out-of-hospital care possible. If every state were to follow ACOG’s recommendations and outlaw CPMs, families who choose home birth will be left with no care providers at all. I think we can all agree that this is an irresponsible policy that puts mothers and babies at risk.”

The Big Push for Midwives calls on ACOG to abandon these outdated policies and work with CPMs to reduce the cesarean rate and to take meaningful steps towards reducing racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes in all regions of the United States. CPMs play a critical role in both cesarean prevention and in the reduction of low-birth weight and pre-term births, the two most preventable causes of neonatal mortality.

Moreover, their training as specialists in out-of-hospital maternity care qualifies CPMs as essential first-responders during disasters in which hospitals become inaccessible or unsafe for laboring mothers. In addition, CPMs work to ensure that all babies born outside of the hospital undergo state-mandated newborn screenings and are provided with legal and secure birth certificates.

Currently, Certified Nurse-Midwives, who work predominantly in hospital settings, are licensed and regulated in all 50 states, while Certified Professional Midwives, who work in out-of-hospital settings, are licensed and regulated in 24 states, with legislation pending in an additional 20 states.

The Big Push for Midwives (<http://www.TheBigPushforMidwives.org>) is a nationally coordinated campaign organized 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 and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists to deny American families access to safe and legal midwifery care. The campaign plays a critical role in building a new model of U.S. maternity care delivery at the local and regional levels, at the heart of which is the Midwives Model of Care, based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes. Media inquiries: Steff Hedenkamp (816) 506-4630, [steff@thebigpushformidwives.org](mailto:steff@thebigpushformidwives.org).

#####

---

The Big Push for Midwives Campaign is fiscally sponsored by Sustainable Markets Foundation, a not-for-profit organization recognized as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3). The mission of the Big Push for Midwives is to build winning, state-level advocacy campaigns towards successful regulation and licensure of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Learn more about the Big Push for Midwives Campaign on the Web at [www.TheBigPushforMidwives.org](http://www.TheBigPushforMidwives.org).

Sustainable Markets Foundation | 80 Broad Street, Suite 1600 | New York, NY 10004-2248  
The Big Push for Midwives Campaign | 2300 M Street, N.W., Suite 800 | Washington, D.C. 20037-1434

*PushThink: The Big Push for Midwives Campaign prints on post-consumer paper.*