

PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign

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Father Knows Best Meets Big Brother Is Watching Physician Group Seeks to Outlaw Home Birth—Is Jail for Moms Next?

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 16, 2008)—Just in time for Father’s Day, at its annual meeting last weekend, the American Medical Association (AMA) adopted a resolution to introduce legislation outlawing home birth, and potentially making criminals of the mothers who choose home birth with the help of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) for their families.

“It’s unclear what penalties the AMA will seek to impose on women who choose to give birth at home, either for religious, cultural or financial reasons—or just because they didn’t make it to the hospital in time,” said Susan Jenkins, Legal Counsel for The Big Push for Midwives 2008 campaign. “What we do know, however, is that any state that enacts such a law will immediately find itself in court, since a law dictating where a woman must give birth would be a clear violation of fundamental rights to privacy and other freedoms currently protected by the U.S. Constitution.”

Until the AMA proposed ‘Resolution 205 on Home Deliveries,’ no state had considered legislation forcing women to deliver their babies in the hospital or limiting the choice of birth setting. Instead, states have regulated the types of midwives that may legally provide care. Currently, 22 states already license and regulate CPMs, who specialize in out-of-hospital maternity care and have received extensive training to qualify as experts in the types of risk assessment and preventive care necessary for safe and high-quality care for women who choose give birth at home. Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), who are trained primarily as hospital-based providers, are licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The resolution did not offer any science-based information for the AMA’s anti-midwife or anti-home birth position.

“Maternity care is a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States,” said Steff Hedenkamp, Communications Coordinator for The Big Push for Midwives. “So it’s no surprise to see the AMA join the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in its ongoing fight to corner the market and ensure that the only midwives able to practice legally are hospital-based midwives forced to practice under physician control. I will say, though, that I’m shocked to learn that the AMA is taking this turf battle to the next level by setting the stage for outlawing home birth itself—a direct attack on those families who choose home birth, who could be subject to criminal prosecution if the AMA has its way.”

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.

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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.

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