

PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign

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Amidst Uproar, Physician Group Votes Not to Target Ricki Lake Questions Remain About How Home Birth Bans Will Be Enforced

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 20, 2008)—At its annual meeting this week, the American Medical Association (AMA) voted to delete references to Ricki Lake in its anti-home birth resolution after the organization was widely criticized by women’s health advocates, reproductive rights organizations and dozens of blogs devoted to everything from celebrity gossip to national politics. The organization also voted to proceed with its plans to promote legislation outlawing home deliveries, as questions lingered about what type of enforcement provisions the group will seek.

“Obviously the AMA was hoping to fly under the radar with its patronizing suggestion that women are choosing to have their babies at home because of something they heard Ricki Lake say on the Today Show,” said Steff Hedenkamp, Communications Coordinator of The Big Push for Midwives Campaign. “Now that they’ve been called on it, Ricki’s no longer in their sites. But what about the rest of us? If the AMA truly believes that those of us who deliver our babies at home with professional midwives are making such a dangerous choice, then the American public deserves to know exactly how they plan to stop it.”

The AMA has presented no evidence to support its claim that home birth is an unsafe choice for low-risk women and their babies. On the contrary, the medical research shows that low-risk women who deliver at home under the care of Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) have the same outcomes as low-risk women who deliver in the hospital, but with far fewer preventable and costly interventions. To date, no state has passed a law forcing hospitalization of all laboring women or dictating place of birth.

As news of the AMA’s anti-home birth proposal spread, legal experts wondered how the organization will propose to enforce such laws. “At best, we can expect to see them push for window-dressing laws that simply condemn home birth as unsafe but are used to harass families who make this choice, as well as the midwives who work with them,” said Susan Jenkins, Legal Counsel for the Big Push for Midwives. “At worst, I fear we could see scenarios very similar to the legislative battle in Missouri over legalizing CPMs, where the medical lobby strong-armed law makers into killing a bill that had broad support from both legislators and the general public. Unfortunately, when it comes to legislation, money talks, and the AMA has a lot of money. Some even go so far as to say Big Medicine is the new Big Tobacco.”

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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