

# PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday, September 1, 2008



## Number Two With a Bullet

### Critical Women's Health Issues Neglected as Physician Group Yet Again Sets its Sights on Midwives

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 1, 2008)—In the newest phase of its ongoing effort to deny women the right to choose their maternity care providers and birth settings, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has announced that eliminating access to midwives who specialize in out-of-hospital birth is now the second most important issue on its state legislative agenda. This move puts restricting access to trained midwives ahead of such critical issues as contraceptive equity, ensuring access to emergency contraception, and the prevention and treatment of perinatal HIV/AIDS.

“ACOG claims to be an advocate of women’s health and choice, but when it comes to the right to choose to deliver your baby in the privacy of your own home with a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) who is specifically trained to provide the safest care possible, ACOG’s paternalistic colors bleed through,” said Susan M. Jenkins, Legal Counsel for the Big Push for Midwives Campaign. “It is astonishing that an organization that purports to be a champion of women’s healthcare would put a petty turf battle that affects less than one percent of the nation’s childbearing women ahead of pressing issues that have an impact on nearly every woman in this country. If this is not dereliction of duty, I can’t imagine what is.”

In recent years, ACOG has led a well-financed campaign to fight legislative reforms that would license and regulate CPMs and has now teamed up with the American Medical Association (AMA) to promote legislation that would prevent families from choosing to give birth at home. Despite these joint efforts, the groups have not been successful in defeating the groundswell of grassroots activism in support of full access to a comprehensive range of maternity care options that meet the needs of all families.

“Wisconsin is a good example of what ACOG and the AMA are up against,” said Jane Crawford Peterson, CPM, Advocacy Trainer for The Big Push. “Our bipartisan grassroots coalition of everyday people from across the state managed to defeat the most powerful and well-financed special interest groups in Wisconsin, all on an expenses-only budget of \$3000 during a legislative session in which \$47 million was spent on lobbying. When you try to deny women the fundamental and very personal right to choose where and how to give birth, they will get organized and they will let their elected officials know that restrictions on those rights cannot stand.”

Noting these successes, ACOG has recently launched its own grassroots organizing effort, calling on member physicians to recruit their patients to participate in its “Who Will Deliver My Baby?” medical liability reform campaign.

“ACOG itself admits that we’re facing a critical shortage of maternity care providers,” said Steff Hedenkamp, Communications Coordinator for the Big Push. “They certainly realize that medical liability reform is nothing more than a band aid and that increasing access to midwives and birth settings is critical to fixing our maternity care system and ensuring that rural, low-income and uninsured women don’t fall through the cracks. Midwives represent an essential growth segment of the U.S. pool of maternity care providers, but instead of putting the healthcare needs of women first, ACOG would rather devote its considerable lobbying budget to a last-ditch attempt to protect its own bottom line. This is not a happy Labor Day for our nation’s mothers and babies.”

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.*