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Certified Professional Midwives NOW

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**Licensing Protects Midwives and Patients;  
'Private Membership Associations' Do Not  
A Statement from The Big Push for Midwives Campaign**

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) — [National media coverage](#) of the recent arrest of an unlicensed individual practicing out-of-hospital midwifery (also called “home birth,” or “community” midwifery) in Nebraska highlights the need for state regulatory regimes for health care providers at the same time it debunks the illusory protection that “Private Membership Associations” (PMAs) promise.

***PMA Inability to Shield Unlicensed Providers***

The Nebraska midwife currently under arrest is one of many providers in both licensed and unlicensed states (*see below*) who have formed PMAs under the mistaken belief that such a body renders them exempt from state and federal law, based on unspecified First and Fourteenth Amendment claims. However, judges have soundly dismissed such claims, as did this [South Dakota federal court that held](#), “Without citation to legal authority, [the litigant] claims PMAs are a valid method by which to avoid federal interference.” For this reason, the lawyers of the Big Push for Midwives Campaign strongly discourage the use of PMAs, and instead recommend licensing midwives, just as all other major health care professionals are licensed.

***Varying Legal Status of Out-of-Hospital Midwives Across the U.S.***

Thirty-five states have legalized the practice of midwifery, most based on the Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) credential. In states that do not legally authorize CPM practice or provide consumer protection through licensing and regulation, families seeking out-of-hospital births are often left with no licensed providers to attend them. Licensing serves as a gateway to ensure that providers are appropriately educated and trained, and that serious deviation from practice is corrected through additional education and/or sanctions.

***Nebraska’s Regulatory Regime — or Lack Thereof***

Such are the circumstances in Nebraska, where families have no legal option for a midwife-attended home birth. Nebraska consumers have been desperate for a thoughtful, appropriate licensing law for CPMs, who are educated, experienced, and nationally certified. When licensed, CPMs are accountable to a licensing board that protects consumers, as is the case for other health professions. By failing to pass a licensing law, the Nebraska legislature has abdicated its responsibility to protect the public’s health. Is this tragedy the wake-up call needed for Nebraska legislators to pass the bill that consumers will present them with next session?

(more)

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***About State Licensing of CPMs***

The Big Push for Midwives Campaign supports appropriate licensure and regulation for CPMs. [States that integrate all midwives](#) into their health care systems have better outcomes for mothers and babies. Families planning out-of-hospital births should have access to licensed health care providers to attend them.

CPMs are professional midwives who specialize, by education and experience, in out-of-hospital birth. CPMs are credentialed by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) to provide the Midwives Model of Care™ as the only midwifery credential that requires expertise in out-of-hospital birth. The CPM credential, issued by NARM, is nationally accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accrediting arm of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. NCCA accredits more than 200 professional credentials, including those of nurse-midwives, nurse anesthetists, nurse practitioners, and critical care nurses.

CPMs provide quality, affordable, accessible, community-based care that reduces costly and preventable interventions, while also reducing the rate of low-birthweight and premature births (see this [annotated guide](#) to the literature on home birth). Women also report that they face less mistreatment when midwives provide their care or they give birth at home or in a birth center (see the recent study published in the June issue of [Reproductive Health](#)). The United States can no longer afford a system that produces inferior results at premium costs.

***About the Big Push for Midwives Campaign***

The mission of the [Big Push for Midwives](#) Campaign is to provide strategic planning and message development for state consumer and midwife groups that are actively working on legislation to license Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), envisioning the day when CPMs are licensed in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

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