Midwives

Essential for Affordable and Effective Maternity Care

- Standard U.S. maternity care is big business, with many unnecessary interventions:
  - About 4 million births per year.
  - About 6 million obstetrical procedures, primarily on healthy women in normal labor.
  - Includes 4 of the 8 most common surgical procedures in the U.S.

- Midwives are key to affordable and effective maternity care in universal health care systems, as many countries have discovered including: England, France, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Spain, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Chile, Thailand.

- Every country in the world with maternal and infant mortality rates lower than the U.S. has universal health care AND midwives attending the majority of births.

- Midwifery care is cost effective compared to physician care:
  - Midwifery training costs less.
  - More full term, full weight, and healthy babies not needing special care.
  - Fewer costly and risky interventions.

- Pregnancy and childbirth are normal processes, not diseases. Contrary to widespread beliefs, expensive and interventive doctor care and hospitalization are rarely needed.

- The US cesarean rate is now a staggering 26%. Hospital-based midwives have a documented 10% cesarean rate in comparison. Unnecessary cesarean sections increase health care costs and contribute toward increased maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

- The Midwives Model of Care is health-promoting – an evidence-based wellness model that improves birth outcomes and is mother-friendly and baby-friendly.

- The American Public Health Association supports “increased access to midwifery services,” and “efforts to increase access to out-of-hospital maternity services … through recognition that legally-regulated and nationally certified direct-entry midwives can serve clients desiring safe, planned, out-of-hospital maternity care services.” (APHA Resolution Increasing Access To Out-Of-Hospital Maternity Care Services Through State-Regulated and Nationally-Certified Direct-Entry Midwife,” October 24, 2001)

Consumers are directly affected by all health care policies!!!

CONSUMERS must be included at every level of health care policy development!