

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!