# PushNews from The Big Push for Midwives

CONTACT
Katherine Prown 414.550.8025 | katie@thebigpushformidwives.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 4, 2010

Certified Professional Midwives NOW

## CDC Report: Demand for Out-of-Hospital Midwife Births Sharply Increases

*Research Debunks Physician Group Claims that Actress Ricki Lake is Responsible for Rise in Out-of-Hospital Births*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (March 4, 2010)—A Centers for Disease Control National Health Statistics report released this week showed a five percent increase in demand for out-of-hospital midwife births in 2005. Seventeen states reported an increase of ten percent or more, numbers that continued for 2006. The increase predates the release of actress Ricki Lake's film, *The Business of Being Born*, which the American Medical Association cited as a leading factor behind the new consumer demand, a claim echoed in an anti-home birth position statement from the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

"The idea that American women choose out-of-hospital delivery because a celebrity had her baby at home or because they value the birth 'experience' over the health of their babies is not only insulting, but it reveals an appalling lack of awareness on the part of ACOG and the AMA about the economic pressures influencing the health care decisions that people are making," said Katherine Prown, PhD, Campaign Manager of The Big Push for Midwives.

The CDC report identified the reduced costs associated with out-of-hospital maternity care as a factor in the increased demand, as well as religious and cultural practices and personal preferences for birth settings that are both safe and private.

Consistent with the medical literature on the safety of home birth under the care of Certified Professional Midwives, the report also found significantly reduced rates of pre-term and low-birth weight in out-of-hospital populations. Certified Professional Midwives, who specialize in out-of-hospital birth and who deliver the majority of U.S. babies born in private homes and freestanding birth centers, provide intensive, individualized pre-natal care that focuses on prevention and risk assessment. The authors of the report identify appropriate risk assessment as a likely factor in the reduced rates of pre-term and low-birth weight in out-of-hospital settings.

"Those of us who have been advocating for increased access to Certified Professional Midwives and out-of-hospital maternity care have long known that the research shows that AMA and ACOG statements about the safety of home birth and the reasons why women choose out-of-hospital delivery have no basis in the evidence," said Prown. "It's great to be able to cite even more research on the safety of out-of-hospital birth and to be able to point to data showing that women in the United States do not, in fact, make decisions about where to have their babies for frivolous, selfish, or trendy reasons."

The Big Push for Midwives Campaign represents tens of thousands of grassroots advocates in the United States who support expanding access to Certified Professional Midwives and out-of-hospital maternity care. The mission of The Big Push for Midwives is to educate state and national policymakers about the reduced costs and improved outcomes associated with out-of-hospital maternity care and to advocate for expanding access to the services of Certified Professional Midwives, who are specially trained to provide it. Media inquiries: Katherine Prown (414) 550-8025, katie@thebigpushformidwives.org

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