

## Fast Facts about Midwives

- Midwifery is legal in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, and Guam.
- The vast majority of US midwives—more than 12,000—are certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs).<sup>1</sup>
- CNMs/CMs attend more than 300,000 births annually, and provide primary care services, including annual exams, writing prescriptions, patient education, and reproductive health services.<sup>2,3</sup>
- More than 50% of CNMs/CMs list physician practices or hospitals/medical centers as their principal employers. Of CNM/CM-attended births, 96.1% occur in hospitals, 2% occur in freestanding birth centers, and 1.8% occur in homes.<sup>4</sup>

## Midwives Provide High Quality Care

Women cared for by midwives compared to women of the same risk status cared for by physicians have:<sup>5,6</sup>

- Higher chance for a normal vaginal birth
- Lower rates of cesarean section
- Reduced rates of labor induction and augmentation
- Significant reduction in incidence of third and fourth degree perineal tears
- Higher rates of breastfeeding
- Lowered risk of neonatal mortality, low birth weight, and infant mortality
- Less use of epidural anesthesia
- Shorter length of stay in the birth facility

## Midwives Provide Cost Effective Care

- Midwifery care results in fewer cesarean births than physician care for equally low-risk women.<sup>2</sup> The average costs for vaginal birth are approximately 50% lower than those for cesarean birth.<sup>7</sup> Every 1,000 women who avoid unnecessary cesarean births amounts to over \$7 million in health care cost savings.<sup>8</sup>
- During pregnancy, 9% fewer women in collaborative care than in physician only care make costly visits to the Emergency Room.<sup>9</sup>
- Each day in the hospital is a significant cost. Of women cared for by midwives and physicians working collaboratively, 28% are discharged before 24 hours.<sup>9</sup>
- Compared to women cared for exclusively by physicians, 6% fewer women cared for by midwives and physicians collaboratively have stays longer than 72 hours.<sup>9</sup>

## Midwives are a Solution to the Health Care Workforce Shortage

“Ob-gyns working collaboratively with midwives is a way to address the gap between the supply of ob-gyns and the demand for women’s health care services.”

-Richard N. Waldman, MD, FACOG, Past President, American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists<sup>10</sup>

“The US population is growing, yet the number of new medical graduates has basically plateaued—hiring nonphysician clinicians is a good solution to accommodate the health care needs of the growing population.”

-The Obstetrician-Gynecologist Workforce in the United States 2011<sup>11</sup>

“CNMs should be better utilized to address the projected health care workforce shortages.”

-*Women’s Health Issues*, January 2012<sup>12</sup>

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