



NEWS RELEASE

Midwives Applaud Legislation to Improve Birth Outcomes Using Evidence-based Practices

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Silver Spring, MD – The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), representing the interests of certified nurse-midwives (CNM) and certified midwives (CM) applauds Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) for introducing the **“Maximizing Optimal Maternity Services for the 21st Century Act of 2011 (MOMS 21),” H.R.2141**. The purpose of this legislation is to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes in the United States by harnessing the best evidence in maternity care delivery.

The need for this legislation is clear, as the problems plaguing maternity care in the U.S. are legion. The U.S. spends more than double per capita on health care than other industrialized countries, but ranks far behind almost all developed countries in key perinatal outcomes, including maternal mortality, preterm birth, and infant mortality. There is a vast body of knowledge identifying evidence-based practices in maternity care, yet the care that most U.S. women receive in childbirth does not follow these practices. There is a growing shortage of maternity care clinicians and, in many parts of the country, an inadequate number of birth centers and hospital facilities equipped with labor and delivery units. These shortages make it difficult for women to access quality maternity care services, particularly in rural areas and inner cities. Enormous disparities exist in maternal and newborn outcomes for African American families, and inadequate racial and ethnic diversity in the maternity care workforce has limited the availability of culturally and linguistically competent care.

“We have an opportunity to lower overall costs and improve maternal health outcomes for the women we serve if we will only follow the evidence,” stated ACNM President Holly Powell Kennedy, Ph.D., CNM, FAAN. “ACNM commends Rep. Roybal-Allard for her leadership in championing strategies to improve maternity care in the U.S.”

The MOMS for the 21st Century Act will create a national focus on maternity care services, expand federal research on best maternity care practices, and support the education of a more culturally diverse interdisciplinary maternity care workforce. Provisions of the bill include:

- Establishment of an Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of Optimal Maternity Care
- Authorization of a national media campaign to educate consumers on evidence-based maternity practices and models of care for best maternity outcomes
- Data collection on maternity care shortage areas

- Expansion of federal research efforts to include innovative maternity care practices and models of care
- Development of core curricula across maternity professional disciplines
- Establishment of loan repayment programs for providers in maternity care shortage areas
- Establishment of reimbursement for midwives who supervise residents, medical students, and student midwives in academic health centers
- Authorization of grant programs for professional organizations to recruit and retain minority maternity care professionals

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With roots dating to 1929, the American College of Nurse-Midwives is the oldest women's health care association in the United States. ACNM's mission is to promote the health and well-being of women and newborns within their families and communities through the development and support of the profession of midwifery as practiced by certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives. Midwives believe every individual has the right to safe, satisfying health care with respect for human dignity and cultural variations. More information about ACNM can be found at www.midwife.org.

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