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**LEADING MIDWIFERY ORGANIZATION LAUNCHES INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE BENEFITS, TOOLS  
FOR ACHIEVING HEALTHY CHILDBIRTH**

***The American College of Nurse-Midwives Healthy Birth Initiative™ Helps to Make More Women,  
Health Care Providers, Hospital Managers Champions of Physiologic Birth***

**Silver Spring, MD** – The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) today introduced *ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™*, a new program that provides resources and tools to help women, their families and health care providers achieve healthy childbirth. [\*ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™\*](#) focuses on understanding and capitalizing on the natural physiology of birth to avoid unnecessary medical interventions, including cesareans, in order to achieve the best childbirth outcomes for mothers and babies.

*ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* also provides evidence-based research to hospital quality managers, highlighting how improving childbirth optimizes their facilities' quality of care and supports midwives and other health care providers who are pursuing improved birth care in their hospitals. The evidence also helps facilities meet their mandate for national quality measurement and reporting requirements.

*"ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* takes a comprehensive look at childbirth in order to better educate women, their families, maternity care providers, and the maternity care system about the benefits of physiologic childbirth," said Tanya Tanner, PhD, MBA, RN, CNM and chair of *ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* Task Force. *"With a philosophy that supports physiologic birth, midwives understand that the woman alone cannot always achieve the birth she desires. She and her family need support from her maternity care team and the facility where she is going to give birth in order to make it a reality.*

*"With the cesarean rate reaching an alarming 33% nationally, and the cost of maternity care continuing to rise, it's imperative that we create and share resources that address the safe, high-quality, low-cost care that's available for women through physiologic birth,"* Tanner said. *"We believe that ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* can help spread the word and empower more moms, families, health care providers and health systems to become champions of physiologic birth."

## For Women and Families

For women, their families and other consumers interested in childbirth, *ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* developed "[\*Normal Healthy Childbirth for Women & Families: What You Need to Know.\*](#)" This 4-page handout is easy to follow, clearly explaining and advocating for the benefits of physiologic birth for women and families. This guide provides an overview of physiologic birth and tips on how it can be achieved, as well as what can disrupt the healthy birth process. This guide was created from a 2012 consensus statement authored by ACNM, the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA), and the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM), the three professional organizations representing midwives in the US.

Judith Lothian, PhD, RN, LCCE, and co-chair of *ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* Consumer Subcommittee, said, "The most important decisions women make about their births are choosing a health care provider and place of birth. '*Normal Healthy Birth for Women and Families: What You Need to Know*' helps women ask the right questions and find health care providers and birth settings that will increase their chances of having a normal, physiologic birth."

The consumer guide includes the endorsement of several major women's health organizations: Lamaze, Centering Healthcare, DONA, Citizens for Midwifery, International Center for Traditional Childbearing, Childbirth Connection, a program of the National Partnership for Women & Families, and International Lactation Consultant Association, and it has the support of the March of Dimes. Available in English and Spanish, the guide is free for download, printing, and distribution. Professionally printed copies in packs of 50 are available for purchase through ACNM at [ShopACNM.com](#).

## For Clinicians

As part of *ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™*, maternity care providers now have a new physiologic birth toolkit at [www.BirthTOOLS.org](#). Developed by ACNM in consultation with Childbirth Connection, the site provides tools, resources and guidelines for maternity care professionals to use to support, promote and facilitate physiologic birth. BirthTOOLS (Tools for Optimizing the Outcomes of Labor Safely) walks providers through evidence that supports care practices for physiologic birth. The site assists clinicians and health care systems in implementing best practices to achieve optimal health outcomes for mothers, babies and families.

The BirthTOOLS site uses a quality improvement framework to guide clinicians in the process of initiating evidence based changes to promote physiologic birth by auditing the impact of the change. The website brings best practice resources and tools from a variety of organizations to one location, organized for easy access by clinicians, unit leaders and hospital system managers. Linkages between national quality measures and specific care changes are highlighted.

"BirthTOOLS.org helps maternity care professionals make physiologic birth a reality," said Lisa Kane Low, PhD, CNM, FACNM and chair of *ACNM's Healthy Birth Initiative™* Toolkit Subcommittee. "The

organization of the site, including a tool box function which allows quick access to resources on a specific topic, and unique stories of improvement from providers and health systems highlighting their experiences, make this an ideal web resource for all professionals providing maternity care.”

The site was developed with consultants from Childbirth Connection, a program of the National Partnership, in collaboration with a committee comprised of ACNM members and representatives from the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN), the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM), and Lamaze International.

### **For Quality Managers**

ACNM’s *Healthy Birth Initiative™* also created the handout, “[Birth Matters](#),” which explores how medical interventions in labor have been misused, resulting in poorer health outcomes, reduction in the quality of care, substantial increases in cost, and fewer choices for women. Directed to hospital quality managers, the handout describes the benefits of healthy, physiologic birth to the women and families they serve, and to health care facilities’ quality outcome measures and patient satisfaction scores.

“As a result of reporting measures issued by the Joint Commission and the National Quality Forum, hospitals and health care providers must now pay attention to processes and procedures around birth,” said MaryJane Lewitt, PhD, CNM and chair of ACNM’s *Healthy Birth Initiative™* Maternity Care System Subcommittee. “With ‘*Birth Matters*’, we now have a tool to illustrate how healthy birth benefits hospitals and organizations, in addition to mothers and babies.”

“*Birth Matters*” was developed under the leadership of ACNM in consultation with representatives from AWHONN, Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association (CAPP) and quality and safety leaders from various facilities across the US. Copies of this guide are available for free for download, printing, and distribution. Professionally printed copies in packs of 50 are available for purchase through ACNM at [ShopACNM.com](#).

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*The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association that represents certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) in the United States. ACNM promotes excellence in midwifery education, clinical practice, and research. With roots dating to 1929, our members are primary care providers for women throughout the lifespan, with a special emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health. ACNM provides research, administers and promotes continuing education programs, establishes clinical practice standards, and creates liaisons with state and federal agencies and members of Congress to increase the visibility and recognition of midwifery care.*

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