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**MIDWIVES, OB-GYNS SUPPORT BILL TO ADDRESS MATERNITY CARE PROVIDER SHORTAGE TO  
PROVIDE PREGNANT WOMEN WITH GREATER ACCESS TO SERVICES WHERE THEY LIVE**

**Silver Spring, MD and Washington, DC** – The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) strongly support legislation introduced today in the U.S. House of Representatives that addresses the maternity care provider shortage and helps many pregnant women and their families, particularly in rural or underserved urban areas of the country, get access to the maternity care provider services they need.

The bill, *Improving Access to Maternity Care Act*, (H.R. 4385) introduced by Congressman Michael Burgess (R-TX-26th) and Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA-24th), would establish a health professional shortage area designation for maternity care under the Public Health Service Act, similar to shortage designations already established for primary care, dental and mental health. The goal of this legislation is to identify and address areas of the U.S. that are experiencing significant shortages of full scope maternity care professionals, including certified nurse-midwives and other maternity care providers. This legislation will also make it possible for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to place eligible professionals within the National Health Service Corp (NHSC) in eligible medical facilities – including hospitals, birthing centers, and other appropriate facilities – in these areas to address maternity care shortages.

Expanding access to maternity care professionals in underserved areas can reduce overall maternity care costs in the U.S. by ensuring women have access to necessary prenatal care and delivery options.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, in May 2012 27,000 health professionals reported that they were actively providing maternity care services (5,710 certified nurse-

midwives and 20,880 obstetrician-gynecologists).<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that there were 3,952,937 births in the U.S. in 2012.<sup>2</sup>

“It is clear that shortages of maternity care professionals exist in the U.S. and the situation is getting worse with significant numbers of retiring professionals,” said Ginger Breedlove, CNM, PhD APRN, FACNM, President of ACNM. “Nearly half of all U.S. counties have no midwife, ob-gyn, or other maternity care professional.”

“When pregnant women have to travel long distances to see a maternity care professional, it is not only difficult for women and their newborns to access necessary prenatal care and delivery options, but also creates safety concerns for the mother and her baby,” Breedlove said. “The bill Rep. Burgess and Rep. Capps introduced today will help to address these concerns and hopefully improve maternity care outcomes.”

“Every woman deserves access to basic health care rights, including annual well-woman health care, preconception health, and reproductive health. But this requires access to women’s care professionals, including ob-gyns,” said Jeanne A. Conry, MD, PhD, President of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. “We believe that investments in women’s health are investments in America’s future, and applaud Reps. Burgess and Capps for their efforts to improve the American women’s access to care.”

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#### **About the American College of Nurse-Midwives**

*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. Visit [www.midwife.org](http://www.midwife.org) for more information.*

#### **About the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists**

*The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College), a 501(c)(3) organization, is the nation’s leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of approximately 57,000 members, The College strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women’s health care. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), a 501(c)(6) organization, is its companion organization. [www.acog.org](http://www.acog.org).*

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2012. Note that these figures do not include self-employed providers.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics Report, September 2013.