

Citizens for Midwifery **NEWS RELEASE**

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Problems with Cesarean Sections

Athens, GA -- Citizens for Midwifery joins with the American College of Nurse-Midwives and other national childbirth organizations in calling for full disclosure regarding complications and harm resulting from cesarean section surgery for childbirth.

Cesarean section is major abdominal surgery associated with a long and well-documented list of risks for both mothers and babies, including life-threatening and long-term problems. While such surgery can be life-saving and may be worth the risks when specific medical complications exist, in the absence of such complications cesarean sections cause harm rather than promoting healthy mothers and babies. When cesarean section is recommended or offered, it is imperative that women be given complete, unbiased and evidence-based information about all the risks and benefits before making a decision.

As of 2004 nearly 30% of babies were delivered by cesarean, while in 2000 19% of healthy low risk women in hospital-based care were subject to cesarean surgery. These rates far exceed all reasonable guidelines for appropriate cesarean section rates.

Midwives attending low risk women in-out-of-hospital settings help these women to safely give birth to healthy babies with only about 4% delivered by cesarean section, in contrast to 19% of low risk women cared for by obstetricians in hospitals.

Citizens for Midwifery supports the rights of women to autonomy and bodily integrity regarding maternity care and birthing choices. Such choices should be made in the context of full disclosure and honest, unbiased and complete informed consent processes. Cesarean sections for no medical indication, by "maternal request" or not, entail serious risks, unnecessarily use scarce healthcare resources, and entail extra costs born by the public. Citizens for Midwifery supports maternity care that nurtures and enables normal birth with minimal interventions.

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Citizens for Midwifery is a national, consumer-based non-profit organization that promotes the Midwives Model of Care, provides information about midwifery and childbirth issues, and speaks up for consumer interests regarding midwifery and maternity care. The Midwives Model of Care is based on the fact that pregnancy and birth are normal life processes. The application of this woman-centered model of care has been proven to reduce the incidence of birth injury, trauma and cesarean section. Find more information about Citizens for Midwifery at www.cfmwifery.org.