

# MIDWIVES AND MOTHERS IN ACTION (MAMA) CAMPAIGN

Advocating for Certified Professional Midwives:  
A high-value option for quality cost-effective maternity care



## Improving Maternity Care by Expanding Patient Choice

### **Improving Maternity Care must be Central to Health Reform**

- Childbirth is the #1 reason for hospitalization in the United States
- 23% of all hospital discharges are related to childbearing, accounting for \$86 billion health care dollars
- 3 of the 4 most common surgical procedures in the U.S. are related to childbearing

### **Childbirth in the U.S. Has Become Dominated by Costly, Unnecessary Interventions. . .**

- 31% of births are now by cesarean section – up 50% since 1996
- 34% of births are now medically induced, increasing the likelihood of prematurity
- Vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) has fallen 50% since 1996 despite overwhelming evidence of the benefits of VBAC to both mothers and babies

### **... But the Quality and Safety of Maternity Care in the U.S. is Poor**

- High infant mortality rate – 29<sup>th</sup> in the world
- High maternal mortality rate – 41<sup>st</sup> in the world
- Indefensible disparities – infant mortality is more than *twice* as high and maternal mortality *four* times as high for African Americans and for Native Americans
- Preterm births have risen 21% and incidence of low birth weight has increased 19% since 1990

### **Patient Choice and Access to Midwives = Lower Cost, Better Outcomes**

- The American Public Health Association and the World Health Organization recommend midwives as the most appropriate and cost-effective maternity care providers for the majority of women.
- A 2007 Washington State Department of Health cost-benefit analysis found that out-of-hospital births attended by Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) resulted in fewer low-birth weight babies, much lower cesarean section rates, and similar rates of infant mortality when compared to low-risk hospital births, while delivering substantial savings to the state budget.
- Nations with the lowest infant mortality (and lower costs) rely on midwives as the primary maternity care providers for the majority of women.
- Among women choosing home birth with Certified Professional Midwives, only 4-5% are transported for cesarean section, while at least 20% of healthy low-risk women laboring in the hospital undergo cesarean section – increasing cost without improving outcomes.
- Mothers cared for by Certified Professional Midwives are more likely to have full-term, full weight babies with fewer neonatal complications, because these midwives provide effective, health-promoting prenatal care and avoid using drugs and other interventions during labor.

### **Solution: Expand Medicaid Coverage to include Certified Professional Midwives and Birthing Centers**

- In 23 states (and growing), mothers may choose licensed Certified Professional Midwives for their maternity care – but access for low-income women is limited until Certified Professional Midwives are included as Medicaid providers.
- Adding Certified Professional Midwives to the list of Medicaid providers will REDUCE costs by reducing hospitalizations and high-cost interventions.
- Offering women on Medicaid the ability to choose a *nationally credentialed midwife*, including those providing maternity services *at home and in birthing centers*, will reduce disparities in both access and outcomes, increase the quality and safety of care that women receive, and save federal and state dollars.