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## **New Survey Shows Women Settling for Less; Major Issues Being Skipped in Conversations with Providers**

American College of Nurse-Midwives Launches *Our Moment of Truth*™ to Improve Maternity Care Conversations, Women's Health Outcomes

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – Conversations about pregnancy and birth are happening virtually everywhere – mommy blogs, social media, television shows – but new data show that when women visit their health care providers, many important conversations simply aren't happening.

A survey of women, released today by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), shows that major health issues are being overlooked and that women may be walking out of medical appointments without the information they need.

Of the women surveyed who have given birth or are pregnant, 62% said their care provider did not discuss how to stay healthy during their pregnancy, 80% said that preparing for motherhood was never discussed, and only about half said their provider spent a great deal of time with them throughout labor and birth.

"Women can play a critical role in getting the good health outcomes they want, especially when it comes to childbirth. But women can only succeed if they are equipped with the best information," said ACNM President Dr. Holly Powell Kennedy, a professor of midwifery at the Yale University School of Nursing. "They need the opportunity to discuss and make decisions on all of their care options with their provider, especially during pregnancy and childbirth, and they shouldn't settle on care that is not right for them."

And that's what is happening – women are settling for health care that is not what they're looking for because they either don't know they have a choice or don't fully understand the issues facing them. Most say they are not getting many of the services they want.

The absence of important conversations with health care providers could be leading women down a path of less than optimal care. Yet, 60% said they would agree to an unnecessary cesarean and 90% would agree to have their labor induced, even if there was no medical reason.

"Evidence shows that interventions, like early labor inductions and cesarean sections, can mean a more difficult labor and tougher recovery for both women and their babies," said Dr. Eugene Declercq, a professor of community health sciences at the Boston University School of Public Health who has researched cesarean section use. "Every woman wants the best for her baby, but the data clearly show that women are not being informed of the risks of medically unnecessary procedures."

These findings beg the question: How can women receive the best care possible during their pregnancy and childbirth?

Today, women and midwives are joining together as part of a new awareness effort to answer that question. [Our Moment of Truth™: A New Understanding of Midwifery Care](#) asks women to take a moment to examine the type of health care they are receiving, evaluate what they want from their health care experience, and ensure important conversations with their provider take place. This nationwide awareness initiative also encourages women to become aware of their full range of options by showing how midwives can address a range of women's health needs.

"Persistent myths about midwives prevent women from seeing a provider who can give them the attentive care they say they want during pregnancy and childbirth," said ACNM Executive Director Lorrie Kline Kaplan. "Women deserve a health care provider who presents different care options during pregnancy and birth, and who takes careful precautions to avoid unnecessary childbirth procedures that may inflict harm on them and their baby, but also uses them when they are medically necessary. Understanding these care options will allow women to play a more active role in their own health decisions and outcomes. The good news is, as more women learn about the high-quality care midwives provide, more women are turning to midwives as partners in their care."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that midwife-attended births are on the rise in the United States, reaching a record high of 8.4% in 2010. In some states, such as New Mexico, more than 1 in every 3 women are seeking the care of a midwife with 37.6% of vaginal births midwife-attended births in 2010<sup>1</sup>.

As part of the new [Our Moment of Truth™](#) initiative, ACNM helps women to take charge of their health with the launch of a new series of tools that help women get the truth about what's best for their bodies and their baby's health. Visit [www.ourmomentoftruth.com](http://www.ourmomentoftruth.com) to learn more about how the high-quality care of a midwife can meet many of the desires women are looking for in their care.

### **Survey Methodology**

The *Our Moment of Truth™* survey was fielded by Lightspeed Online Research, Inc. in August 2012. The survey was completed by 1,252 women between the ages 18 and 45, of a variety of cultural backgrounds, from across the United States. The survey, consisting of 23 questions, was fielded through the SurveyMonkey online platform.

### **About *Our Moment of Truth™: A New Understanding of Midwifery Care***

*Our Moment of Truth™: A New Understanding of Midwifery Care* presents midwifery as a solution for many women who are looking for more out of their care. Recognizing that many women are not receiving the care they desire, *Our Moment of Truth™* challenges women to take a moment to examine the type of health care they are receiving, evaluate what they want from their health care experience, and become aware of their full range of options. *Our Moment of Truth™* offers women the information and tools they need to ask the right questions of their provider and have an important dialogue on critical health issues before moving forward with a care plan. Explore the new *Our Moment of Truth™* tools and resources for finding desired health care at [www.ourmomentoftruth.com](http://www.ourmomentoftruth.com).

### **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.

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<sup>i</sup> Data adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. VitalStats. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/vitalstats.htm>. Accessed September 23, 2012.