

CQMC Coalition for Quality Maternity Care

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Maternal Health Organizations Announce New Coalition

Tuesday, April 5, 2011: Nine national professional, consumer, and human rights organizations have come together to form the Coalition for Quality Maternal Care (CQMC) to champion the urgent need for national strategies to improve the quality and value of maternal and newborn health care in America.

The launch of the CQMC comes on the heels of the release of “Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being,” an inter-agency federal report of how women are faring in the United States today and how these trends have changed over time (www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/Women_in_America.pdf). Prepared by the US Department of Commerce and the Office of Management and Budget in support of the White House Council on Women and Girls, the publication specifically highlights current challenges in maternal health, including the highest US cesarean birth rate on record at 32 percent of all births in 2008, the resulting increase in complications for women and their newborns, and higher costs. The report also notes that the US maternal mortality rate, which was declining until the mid-1980s, is now significantly higher than for many European countries.

“The state of health of childbearing women and their newborns is considered a key indication of a society’s health and the effectiveness of its health care system,” said Maureen Corry, Executive Director of Childbirth Connection, a member of the Coalition. “Unfortunately, many maternal and newborn health indicators are declining rather than improving. The current quality shortfalls place all childbearing women and their newborns at risk, and unnecessarily add to the fiscal challenges for our health care system.”

“We spend far more on maternal and newborn care than other industrialized nations, yet the US ranks behind many of these countries on key maternal and newborn health indicators,” said Larry Cox, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA. “It’s time to shine a light on this reality and improve the quality, health outcomes, and value of maternity care in our country.”

The CQMC is working to establish national strategies to ensure access to affordable, high quality maternity care for all women and infants. It seeks to achieve this goal by removing barriers to optimal maternal health practice, promoting models of care that are evidence-based, improving maternity care choices for women, and reducing disparities in maternal and newborn health outcomes. In the US, profound racial disparity in maternal mortality persists. African American women are more than three times more likely to die in childbirth than white women.

“In the case of maternity care, we have extensive knowledge about what works and what doesn’t,” said Holly Kennedy, CNM, PhD, FACNM, FAAN, President of the American College of Nurse-Midwives. “We need a strategic approach to make evidence-based practice the standard of care for all women.”

The founding member organizations of the CQMC include: the American Association of Birth Centers; American College of Nurse-Midwives; Amnesty International USA; Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses; Black Women’s Health Imperative; Childbirth Connection; International Center for Traditional Childbearing; Midwives Alliance of North America; and, the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives. CQMC seeks additional partners to promote optimal maternal health care throughout the nation. For more information about the CQMC and how to become a member organization, please contact Lorrie Kline Kaplan, Executive Director of the American College of Nurse-Midwives, at (240) 485-1810 (lkaplan@acnm.org).

