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BirthNet questions conclusions in AP article

An article on the AP Newswire entitled "Prosecutions, jailings highlight debate on safety and choice," by Martha Mendoza, examines the prosecution of unlicensed midwives and the statistically rare cases of injury during home birth.

The criminal prosecution of a few midwives does provide sensational "news." Yet, those prosecutions can be avoided by developing regulations that will provide consumers access to safe, effective out-of-hospital maternity care and will provide all midwives with the disciplinary process afforded to other licensed professionals, avoiding costly criminal cases.

Women want the Midwives Model of Care

Women and families want safe, respectful, woman-centered maternity care, the kind of care provided by midwives who practice the Midwives Model of Care, including the nationally-recognized Certified Professional Midwife credential. Consumers and midwives in many states are working to change laws and regulations to ensure access to all midwives in all settings.

Are Hospitals Safe for Healthy Mothers and Babies?

Much attention has been paid over the last few years to the dangers that hospitals pose to patients in general, whether from medical mistakes, risks of infection, or the nursing shortage. One estimate puts the death of infants in 2000 from infections acquired in hospitals alone at over 2100. Given the potential for errors, infections, and unnecessary interventions associated with hospital birth, why should healthy women be required to put themselves or their babies at risk by entering hospitals when they are not sick?

What does the US have to show for its high tech approach to birth?

Despite a hospital birth rate of 99%, virtually all of which include technological interventions of some sort, the United States has one of the worst infant mortality rates in the developed world -- ranking 27th, just behind Cuba. Without exception, developed countries that have lower infant mortality rates than the U.S. also have higher out-of-hospital birth rates, more midwife-attended births, and fewer interventions.

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BirthNet is a non-profit organization whose mission is to educate the public about maternity care in order to improve it. Childbirth is a normal, natural and profound event in a woman's life. BirthNet's goal is to encourage all women and families to learn about their rights and options. Our primary programs include education in the classroom (high school or college classes), community forums or workshops, and media outreach. For more information about BirthNet, please contact Carolyn Keefe 518-482-2504 or birthnetalbany@yahoo.com.