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## **BirthWatch praises *Friends* birth**

BirthNet's BirthWatch praises the NBC show *Friends* for showing a breech birth with no drugs or surgery on its season-ending episode last night. *Friends* made an important statement about the safety of vaginal breech birth and the ability of women to give birth unmedicated and without unnecessary intervention.

We are encouraged by the fact that none of the women depicted in the episode was given intravenous fluids or pain medications and few were hooked up to electronic fetal monitors. We are also impressed that Rachel was not offered interventions to speed up her labor even when she asked for them. This sends an important message to the millions of women who watched *Friends* last night that they can labor and give birth naturally.

While actress Jennifer Aniston clearly had little or no understanding of what a long labor would look like, she did a great job during the birth. Also, though the writing included many of the old chestnuts common when depicting birth on entertainment television -- the character arrives at the hospital in a hurry at the first sign of in labor, stays in bed in a hospital gown, is attended by an obstetrician, and her only support is an attentive but sometimes clueless father -- it was often funny and touching.

BirthWatch applauds *Friends* for encouraging women to realize that they can give birth without drugs and that birth can happen without unnecessary interventions.

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BirthWatch is a BirthNet program that reviews the depiction of birth on network entertainment programs. BirthNet educates the public about maternity care in order to improve it. We believe that birth is a normal, natural and profound event in a woman's life; and we encourage women 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 [kpbitbox@nycap.rr.com](mailto:kpbitbox@nycap.rr.com).

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