

## What Is A Florida Licensed Midwife?

- ♥ Professional practitioner providing expert prenatal, labor, delivery and postpartum services to women having normal, healthy pregnancies.
- ♥ Graduate of a 3-year academic and clinical midwifery education program.
- ♥ Licensed requirements meet established national and international professional standards.

### Midwives Provide Safe, Effective Maternity Care

- ♠ Quality care, with informative, family-centered guidance through the childbearing cycle.
- ♠ International track record of excellent maternal-child health outcomes
- ♠ Lower maternity care costs, in part through reduced reliance on cesarean surgery.

Midwifery care excels in family-centered client education. Extensive one-on-one consultation between midwife and mother effectively supports the mother in adopting good health behaviors for herself and her family.

Through Licensed Midwifery, Florida shows leadership in health policy innovation. Florida's statute is seen as a standard for direct-entry midwifery programs by many other states. Continued support by the Florida Legislature gives all Florida families access to this choice of time-honored, quality maternity care.

Florida has been licensing midwives since 1931. The Midwifery Practice Act (FS 467) was updated in 1982 and 1992, based on World Health Organization standards and successful European direct-entry midwifery programs. To become licensed, an applicant completes a three-year program of academic and clinical education and must pass the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) national certification examination.

Licensed Midwives are autonomous maternity care providers for women experiencing normal healthy pregnancies. Midwives also work collaboratively with the physician-led maternity care team, if medical indications arise. Licensed Midwives offer childbirth services in clients' home, birth centers, clinics and hospitals, and they are eligible for reimbursement by private insurers and Medicaid.

Midwives deliver over 80% of the babies born in countries, which have fewer infant and maternal deaths, lower caesarean rates and lower health care costs than the United States.

- ♥ The United States ranks 33<sup>rd</sup>, worldwide in infant survival(2009 per U.N.)
- ♥ Florida's rate of low birth weight babies is twice as high as in Sweden or Finland, where midwifery services are standard care for women with normal, healthy pregnancies( 8% vs 4% low birth weight)
- ♥ Women under the care of a midwife have significantly fewer costly cesarean births, when comparing similar pregnancy profiles. Florida's statewide 38.2 % cesarean rate ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> within the U.S., with caesarean birth costing twice as much as vaginal births