

Los Angeles Wholistic Birth Center and School of Midwifery

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

-Martin Luther King, Jr. (25 March 1966)



Problem: Health Inequities

- African-American babies are twice as likely to be born prematurely and low birth weight and to die within the first year of life than White babies.
- African-American women have the highest rate of cesarean section in the U.S.; cesareans increase the risk of birth complications, maternal and infant mortality.
- Maternal mortality is the leading perinatal health disparity between African-Americans and Caucasians; African-American mothers are 5 times more likely to die of a pregnancy-related complication than Caucasian women; this rate has not decreased in 2 decades.
- The US spends more on maternity care than any other industrialized country. Despite this women in the U.S. have a higher rate of dying from pregnancy complications than those in 40 other countries.
- The U.S. cesarean section rate has increased for 11 consecutive years, rising to the highest ever national rate of 31.8% in 2007. The rate of vaginal birth after cesarean has declined 73% from 1997 to a rate of 9.7% in 2006.

Solution: Midwifery Care and Birth Centers

- Midwives are associated with increased maternal empowerment and satisfaction, fewer cesarean sections, lower rates of prematurity and low-birth weight, neonatal death and reduced expenditures on maternity care.
- Healthy People 2020 objectives for maternal-infant health can be met through Midwifery Care.
- The Cesarean Section rate in freestanding birth centers is 4.4%. Intrapartum and neonatal mortality rates in birth centers is 1.3 per 1000 births.
- There are two pathways into midwifery in California: The Certified Nurse-Midwifery route and the Licensed Midwifery route. There are no vocational schools in Los Angeles County to train midwives or public health birth centers in the region.



Web: <http://www.socalbirth.com/pathways/LA-midwifery-school-birth-center.html>

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“The question should be, is it worth trying to do, not can it be done.” Allard Lowenstein, twentieth-century American diplomat

Plans to open our midwife training school and birth center serving disadvantaged families are underway.

Who We Are

* We are a dedicated group of public health professionals, childbirth educators, maternal-infant health advocates, midwives, doctors and community members committed to making an impact in reducing ethnic disparities in birth outcomes of mothers and infants in Los Angeles.

Our Mission

* Developing an opportunity for women's economic empowerment and vocational development in communities of color where birth outcomes are the poorest by establishing a midwifery training birthing center in the region.

* Creating a compassionate, harmonic birthing environment for families in the form of a birth center that embraces cultural diversity and a holistic model of care and promotes mother/infant bonding and secure attachment.

* Supporting increased integration of midwifery in standard prenatal and postnatal care.

Our Strategy:

Advocacy - Educate policymakers and stakeholders about health inequities in maternal-infant health and the role of the midwifery model of care and freestanding birth centers in reducing these inequities.

Empowerment - Conduct training for maternal-infant health workers and provide prenatal education, support and referrals for pregnant women and their families. Provide an opportunity for women's economic empowerment and community revitalization through a midwifery training school and freestanding birth center.

Partnerships - Collaborate with other advocacy groups, agencies and community-based organizations seeking to improve perinatal health disparities and implement the midwifery model of care.



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