

FRIENDS OF MICHIGAN MIDWIVES

educate • promote • support

From the President

Melissa Ryba

Midwives and consumers alike have been asking some great questions about what the impact of licensing Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) will mean for the practice of out-of-hospital midwifery in Michigan. The issue of licensure is a serious one, and we want to make sure everyone has accurate information on this topic. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers that will hopefully clarify this issue and open lines of communication regarding licensure.

Ask your midwife how she feels about licensure, and let her know as a consumer how you feel about it. Our Board and the Michigan Midwives Association Legislative Core Group are available to answer any questions or discuss any concerns you may have. For further information, please feel free to contact us personally, or attend one our legislative update sessions. The next one is scheduled for October 29, in Lansing and we would love to see you there!



Q: *Has there been a bill already written?*

A: No, there is no bill written yet. First, we will work with the lobbyist we have hired to find a sponsor for the bill. Next, we will draft the bill. We hope to do this in early 2011.

Q: *In other states like Ohio and Illinois, out-of-hospital births are illegal and midwives have to practice underground. Could that happen in Michigan?*

A: Absolutely, and it could happen literally overnight. This would be devastating to out-of-hospital birth in Michigan. We believe most midwives would be forced to abandon their professions. Those choosing to continue practicing would face legal prosecution if discovered.

Q: *Will licensure cause the government to take over out-of-hospital births and add unnecessary regulations and red tape?*

A: The government is very much a part of out-of-hospital births in that even though out-of-hospital midwives are unregulated, they are at risk of being investigated criminally for births and being prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license. By midwives and consumers taking the lead in licensing, we are ensuring that the terms for licensure are created BY midwives, FOR midwives. If we wait until the

Mission

Statement:

To educate and inform the public about the profession of midwifery and the Midwives Model of Care; to promote and support the profession of midwifery in the state of Michigan; to support local chapters of FoMM in providing hands on services and assistance to the midwives in their area.

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government decides that all out-of-hospital births attended by midwives are illegal, and midwives are forced underground, as in Ohio and Illinois, it is MUCH harder to reverse that decision. It is much better for us to take the initiative, be proactive, and create licensure on our terms.

Q: *Will out-of-hospital birth midwives no longer be able to practice vbacs (vaginal births after cesarean)?*

A: Nothing has been written yet, but it is important for us as a group to keep these births available to women seeking out-of-hospital births. Several Board members of FoMM have had vbac births, and this issue is near to our hearts. Everything that can be done will be done to ensure that these options remain available.

Q: *Will licensure dissuade new midwives from entering the profession?*

A: No, in fact, states where licensure has taken effect, the number of CPMs has risen. In Wisconsin, during the 3 years they have had licensure, the number of CPMs has doubled. They report the practices of these midwives are busier than ever. Many new midwives are looking for a credential that acknowledges them for the professionals that they are. We NEED more midwives to ensure that our daughters someday will also benefit from a midwife's care!

FoMM Events!

Janelle Beeman, Events Chair

It is an exciting time to be involved in supporting our Michigan midwives.

As we gear up for the November elections, FoMM has held several Legislative Update Informational Meetings with more planned for the future. The next one is scheduled for October 29, 2010 in Lansing to be held in conjunction with the Michigan Midwives Association conference. Legislative Update meetings were held on July 25th in Traverse City and on

September 18th in Kalamazoo. Thanks all who attended!

In addition to the Legislative Update meetings, FoMM sponsored two "Meet Your Lobbyist" trainings in early October, held in Traverse City and Okemos. Both trainings were well attended and FoMM members enjoyed a dynamic morning with our lobbyist, Jean Doss. Attendees learned specific tips and tools for advocating to our elected officials in our own communities and directly in

Lansing. If you were unable to attend one of these meetings, but are interested in learning more, please contact any FoMM Board Member.

The Great Lakes Bioneers Conference in Traverse City featured a FoMM information booth. Bioneers is always a fun event to attend with lots of midwife supporters. The conference was wonderful once again this year and FoMM is proud to be a part of all its incredible positive energy. Thanks to all who helped 'woman' the booth!

Legislative Update Informational Meeting

Friday, October 29th
7 to 9 p.m.
Lansing

Radisson Hotel, Main Conference Room

Midwives, interested students, childbirth professionals, consumers, and supporters are invited to hear the latest update on the progress of the MMA's Legislative Committee, as it moves toward introducing legislation to license Certified Professional Midwives in 2011. The meeting will also feature information on how you can get involved in the licensure effort!

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

We have some great volunteers working behind the scenes. Their help has been critical and we want to extend our appreciation to these great assets to Friends of Michigan Midwives! Thank you for giving your time and your talents to FoMM!

☛ Birth Kalamazoo (Jessica English and Beth Hawver) for sponsoring and helping coordinate the September 18th Legislative Update meeting in Kalamazoo.

☛ Colleen Creehan for letting us use her beautiful photography for our website and brochures. She also created some wonderful thank you cards for MMA and FoMM to use.

☛ Karen Griggs for creating our newsletter, pledge cards, and brochures.

☛ Russ Ryba for providing technical help on the new website.

☛ Our Board Members, who have all been working hard at making FoMM a strong organization!

Fundraising Update

Lauren Murphy, Fundraising Chair

FoMM is going on a pledge drive! Please check your mailboxes for a Friend of Michigan Midwives pledge card in the coming weeks. If you haven't received your pledge card by mid-October, please send an email to fundraising@friendsofmichiganmidwives.com and we'll send you a pledge card right away. If you've been meaning to get involved with FoMM, but weren't sure how, this is your chance. We hope this will be a convenient involvement opportunity for everyone. Lobbyists are expensive to retain, so every donation of any amount will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance - we look forward to hearing from you!

Your FoMM Board will also be planning a spring "Walk for Midwives" fundraiser. We have not decided on a location (or locations) yet and are open to suggestions. This fundraiser will provide a fantastic opportunity to meet other homebirth families and show pride in the cause. In the meantime, please think of a few businesses we could ask to sponsor a "Walk for Midwives." Securing many generous sponsors will be key in making this fundraising effort profitable and successful.

Contact me at fundraising@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org if you know of a business or would like to help organize these exciting events!



Please send donations to:
 Vera Davis
 5962 Cedar Ridge Dr
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Or go online to:
friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

FoMM MEMBERSHIP FORM

FoMM thanks you for your generous donation! All donations will be used for the promotion of the profession of midwifery and midwife friendly legislation.

- \$20 Annual FoMM Membership
- \$50 Family FoMM Membership
- \$150 Lifetime FoMM Membership
- \$150 Professional Membership. Includes listing on FoMM website.
- \$500 Ring of Fire Membership - Circle of Givers whose generous donations are used directly for lobbyist expenses.
- \$_____ Any donation is welcome and appreciated!

Name _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Legislative Update

Kathi Mulder and Kelly Drake

The Friends of Michigan Midwives and the Michigan Midwives Association's Legislative Committee continue to lay the groundwork for introducing legislation in 2011 to license Certified Professional Midwives in Michigan. Informational meetings were held in Traverse City in July and in Kalamazoo in September to update midwives and interested students, childbirth professionals, consumers, and supporters on the progress of the licensure effort. The next meeting will be held in Lansing on Friday, October 29 from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Radisson Hotel, Main Conference Room. Plan to attend this exciting gathering to learn all of the most up-to-date news. Meet newly hired lobbyist consultant, Jean Doss, a dynamic woman with over 20 years of lobbying experience. Hear stories from those who've been meeting with legislators. Share your ideas. Get involved. Great Michigan wines, cider and light food will be served.

The Legislative Committee also is laying the groundwork at the state Capitol. Committee members met with state legislators in Lansing in June, to raise awareness of the licensure effort and to gain support for the legislation when it is introduced next year. The outing was very productive and quite educational. The Legislative Committee will begin to ramp up its presence in Lansing over the next couple months, and we are seeking FoMM members to join us at the Capitol and speak directly with legislators about how important this issue is to consumers. Volunteers had an opportunity to attend a training session with Jean Doss on how to approach legislators effectively in early October. If you were unable to attend these sessions, but are interested in learning more, please contact Kelly Drake, MMA@friendsofmichiganmidwives.com, or Melissa Ryba, president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.com, for more information.

Another way FoMM members can get involved is by volunteering on legislators' election campaigns. This is one of the most effective ways of influencing legislators and educating them about who we are. Plus, it is EASY – you can even do it with your kids! Just contact a campaign in your area, say you are working on behalf of the Friends of Michigan Midwives, and offer your help. Please consider donating an afternoon of your time for this cause. Contact Kelly Drake or Melissa Ryba if you have any further questions or need ideas of legislators to support, and to let us know that you are helping!

FoMM Board Members - *learn*

more about new Board Members on page 6

Melissa Ryba, *President*

Traverse City

president@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Melissa Hale, *Vice-President*

Sparta

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Kelly Drake, *MMA LCG Liaison*

East Lansing

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Janelle Beeman, *Events Chair*

Traverse City

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Lauren Murphy, *Fundraising Chair*

Traverse City

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Janine Tryban, *Marketing/PR Chair*

Ray

marketing@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Beth Hawver, *Southwest Regional Coordinator*

Kalamazoo

kzoo@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Melissa Waterstripe,

Northern Regional Coordinator

Cedar

northernmichigan@friendsofmichiganmidwives.org

Open, *Ann Arbor Regional Coordinator*

Open, *Detroit Regional Coordinator*

Open, *Grand Rapids Regional Coordinator*

Open, *Lansing Regional Coordinator*

We Believe
Peace on Earth begins at birth.

Birth Story

Melissa Waterstripe, Mother

I had been excited all day! Our midwives were coming over for our home visit that evening and during the previous couple weeks I'd been thinking, "As soon as we have the home visit I can go into labor!"

At the end of the home visit around 8:45pm my midwife, Kathi, instructed me to tell her the moment anything started to happen. I went to bed, but didn't stay there long. I called Kathi at 10:00pm. The contractions were irregular and mild. She told me to go to bed and call her if labor picked up. At 12:30am I called her to tell her the contractions were coming every five minutes. She said to give it a little more time. After swaying with the dryer, a dresser and my husband Kirk, I called Kathi once again and she was on her way.

Kirk began to fill the birthing tub and my Dad soon arrived. With great pounding, Dad put up a support beam under the birthing room - He'd been concerned that the floor wouldn't handle the weight of five adults and the tub! When he came upstairs he paused to give me a kiss and then exited quickly.

As Kathi and Karen arrived, Kirk kept tabs on the tub and came to be with me during contractions. By 3:30am the contractions hadn't gotten much harder. Kirk reminded me to picture what I wanted to happen. I relaxed deeply into the next couple contractions and they immediately became stronger. By 5:30am, I was unable to stay with the "waves" without moaning. I asked for Kathi because I wanted to know how far I had dilated. I was at about seven centimeters, just as Kirk had thought from my moans.

I climbed into the tub, and soon the contractions really kicked in. I was having great difficulty staying with them and moaned, "Ooooh, open, open." Kathi mentioned my reminder cards, and I began reciting my favorite one, "Breathe! Help me as the next generation carves a pathway from my body. Breathe! In this space between worlds I link my life with yours."

Lauren, our four-year-old, peeked in about 6:15am but didn't come in the room. I asked her if she was upset, and she said, "No, Mom. It's just like you practiced."

I watched the sky lighten and listened to a robin sing, but the waves continued to keep my attention. I was able to go in and out of "laborland" and joked a bit, saying, "I thought it was supposed to be easier the second time. This isn't any easier!"

As I started pushing, my water broke. I said, "It

burns, it burns!" Everyone came into the room as the baby's head was crowning. I felt it and so did Kirk. I felt a surge of energy. With a primal noise I pushed hard and the head was born. I took another breath and pushed out the rest of our baby. I heard Kathi say, "Catch your baby, Melissa," and I brought this slippery, amazing creature to the surface. "You're here! My baby!" I sobbed as I looked into my newborn's face. After several minutes I noticed the gender. I asked Lauren, "Do you see? Do you see what it is? It's a girl!"



I want to hold the moment forever. I want to close my eyes and feel the waves, the burning, the urge to push, the baby passing through my body, see her floating in the water for that brief moment, and feel her in my hands for the first time.



FoMM Board Changes

We have had several changes since summer regarding our Board.

We want to say thank you and good-bye to Areka Blain, who was our Marketing/PR Coordinator. Areka helped create our beautiful new website, friendsofmichiganmidwives.org. Thanks for your work Areka! Filling the position is Janine Tryban, who lives in Ray, MI, near the Detroit Area. Welcome Janine!

We have had two Regional Coordinators resign, Jodi Borsk, our Grand Rapids RC and Jahmanna Salassie, our Ann Arbor RC. Jodi and Jahmanna are both aspiring midwives who are focusing their time now on their education. We wish them well on their path to midwifery! Those positions **are still open, if you are interested in becoming a Regional Coordinator,**

please email any of the current Board listed on page 4.

We have a NEW Regional Coordinator, Beth Hawver, from the Kalamazoo Area. Beth will cover the Southwestern Michigan area. We are very excited to have a representative from this area of the state. Welcome Beth!

FoMM Board Member Biographies

Janelle Beeman

I am mom to 12 month old Dalton and partner to Kevin. Also included in our family is our little Chihuahua mix, Uno. I am currently a stay-at-home mom, though my background is in the field of veterinary medicine. I have lived in the Grand Traverse area my entire life, but just moved to downtown Traverse City for the first time. Our family is excited to be able to walk or ride bikes to all that the city has to offer. I decided to get involved with Friends of Michigan Midwives after giving birth to Dalton at home in September of 2009. I was so moved by the process of birth and the power of women to birth naturally, that I wanted to share the experience with everyone. It is my hope that women everywhere will always have the option to birth out-of-hospital and in the caring hands of a midwife. I have chosen to volunteer my time to help educate people about out-of-hospital birth, and to ensure that it remains an option in Michigan.



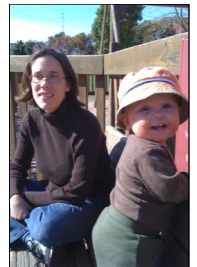
Beth Hawver

I live in Kalamazoo with my husband Joe and our 2 children, John (3) and Lucinda (8 months). I am a birth doula and childbirth educator with Birth Kalamazoo. Natural birth came on my radar after my sister had a traumatic birth experience that ended in a cesarean. My son was born naturally in the hospital and my daughter was born at home. After having my own empowering, transformative birth experiences, I have felt called to the world of birth and helping women know their options. I choose to be involved with FoMM because I trust birth. I want to be part of this movement that will help ensure that my daughter can also have a safe, empowering birth in or out of the hospital.



Lauren Murphy

I live in Traverse City with my husband Nathan Miller and our 10-month-old son, Rhys. I am a member of the Kalamazoo and Traverse Symphony Orchestras, and have played bassoon with many other Michigan orchestras. Even before becoming pregnant with Rhys, I knew I wanted an alternative to hospital birth. I'd read Naomi Wolf's book *Misconceptions* and heard my mother's complaints with hospital interventions during her births. Thankfully, Rhys was born at home, where my labor was allowed to progress naturally and my husband was able to play an integral role in the process. I firmly believe the woman-centered approach of the Midwives Model of Care is superior.



Janine Tryban

Currently living in Ray, in the northern Metro Detroit area, I job-share as a veterinarian with my husband so that one of us is always home with our three children.

My first daughter was born in the hospital, for no other reason than that's what "everyone" does. I had many interventions, which I didn't know any better than to allow. My daughter was healthy, so I didn't think about it too much until I became pregnant again.

At that time, I began to research ways to improve my birthing experience. That research ultimately led me to consider a home birth. After the birth of my son, at home with Kathi Mulder, I knew there was no better way for me to give birth. My third child was also born at home.

A local hospital has an enormous banner on the front of the building with a picture of an adorable new baby. The caption reads: "It's all about the end result." The idea that a positive birthing experience for the mother must be pitted against a healthy outcome for the baby is the reason I am working with FoMM. The Midwifery Model of Care is so appealing because it proves that *both* are important, and *both* can be achieved. That is why I feel it is so important educate women on their options when it comes to giving birth and to keep out of hospital birth with midwives legal and safe in Michigan.

