

# USING *THE MAMA SHERPAS* AS AN ADVOCACY TOOL

*The Mama Sherpas* can be used as a tool to educate, inform and mobilize audiences on issues surrounding maternal health, women's rights and access to high quality and affordable health care in the United States. The *Mama Sherpas* puts a lens on an evidence-based, collaborative care model that puts midwives at the center of women's health care. In conjunction with your screening event, we recommend focusing your call-to-actions on the following key issues.

**Collaborative care among doctors and midwives in a hospital setting results in better outcomes for mother and child and reduces the number of c-section and unnecessary interventions.**

#### **Key Issues**

- Ability for midwives to practice: full practice authority for midwives (state policy level)
- Access to midwives: shortage of midwives and midwifery training programs in the United States
- Promoting limited interventions and supporting natural birth in a collaborative care setting
- Misperceptions about midwifery care

**Midwifery care reduces the cost of childbirth through judicious use of costly technology and by reducing c-section rates.**

#### **Key Issues**

- Medical costs and "fee-for-service" payment models for birth
- Shortage of midwives and midwifery training programs in the United States
- Cultural misperceptions about midwifery care

**VBAC births are possible and desirable for many women.**

#### **Key Issues**

- VBAC bans in hospital systems (generally a hospital level policy)
- Misperceptions about the viability/safety of VBACs

**Vaginal breech birth can be done safely in many circumstances.**

#### **Key Issue**

- Lack of medical training and awareness of techniques to support vaginal breech births

**Midwives are often on the front lines of poverty, providing low-income women with holistic maternal care.**

#### **Key Issues**

- Ability for midwives to practice: full practice authority for midwives (state policy level)
- Access to midwives: shortage of midwives and midwifery training programs in the United States
- Misperceptions about midwifery care being only for certain classes of women

**Giving birth is "normal" and images of birth should not induce fear, disgust or anxiety.**

#### **Key Issues**

- Cultural taboos about images of women's bodies and birth
- Altering prevalent media views of women in labor



The *Mama Sherpas* is a great way to introduce midwifery to a variety of audiences and raise awareness about collaborative care models and natural physiological birth.

**Consider hosting a community screening and help spread the word about midwives!**

- [www.themamasherpas.com/request-a-screening/](http://www.themamasherpas.com/request-a-screening/)

**For more information about healthy births and midwifery care, visit:**

- [www.midwife.org/ACNM-Healthy-Birth-Initiative](http://www.midwife.org/ACNM-Healthy-Birth-Initiative)
- [www.ourmomentoftruth.com](http://www.ourmomentoftruth.com)

#### **Additional Resources**

*The Mama Sherpas* can serve as a powerful complement to numerous existing ACNM advocacy resources.

For more information about advocacy tools for your screening event, contact:

Jesse Bushman  
Director of Advocacy and  
Government Affairs  
E: JBushman@acnm.org  
P: 240-485-1843