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Where's My Midwife? That is the Question on International Day of the Midwife. New Podcast Launches as Companion Crowdmap Links Midwives to Pregnant People

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – On this International Day of the Midwife on May 5, 2021, tens of thousands of families are joining the Big Push for Midwives Campaign to ask loudly, “Where’s My Midwife?” To help answer this question, the Big Push welcomes all to its new website for the [Where’s My Midwife?](#) initiative to help build back midwifery and community birth in the United States.

THE CROWDMAP AND A PODCAST

The initiative’s first project, the **Where’s My Midwife? Crowdmap**, launched in April 2020 to connect midwives trained in out-of-hospital birth with pregnant people wishing to give birth in community (out-of-hospital settings), such as private homes and freestanding birth centers. The initiative’s second project is **Where’s My Midwife? A Podcast**, that tells the stories of midwives and the families who love the excellent maternity care their midwives provide in communities across the nation. The [trailer and first three episodes](#) of the new long-format podcast were released in April 2021.

BUILD BACK MIDWIFERY AND COMMUNITY BIRTH

“When we say ‘build back midwifery and community birth,’ it is important to recognize the truth of how midwives have always been with us across all of human history. It is also essential to unflinchingly examine how it is only in the last 120 years or so that midwives have been pushed back, pushed out, and pushed down by Big Medicine in the U.S.,” said Steff Hedenkamp, The Big Push for Midwives Steering Committee member and *Where’s My Midwife? A Podcast* co-host. “There are many strong words to describe the actions taken by the AMA in the U.S. to eliminate midwives at the turn of the last century, and more words and phrases to call out the ongoing attempts by organized medicine to restrict and confine midwifery and community birth to this very day. If you ask me, some of those descriptive words include tragic outcomes for women, arrogant and unchecked medical hubris, and deliberate restraint of trade by physician competitors.”

Hedenkamp adds that anti-midwife policies designed to deter midwives, limit their scope of practice, and prevent licensure are out-of-step and dangerously discordant today in the presence of a dire [U.S. maternal mortality crisis](#). Attempts to weaken and undermine midwives fly in the face of scientific evidence and increasingly urgent recommendations for midwives to be regulated through licensure, fully integrated into the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) Continuum of Care in communities, and covered in public and private insurance plans in every state and territory. Further endorsement of these recommendations can now also be found in new reports from two highly regarded U.S. think tanks, the Aspen Institute’s Health Strategy Group, [Reversing the U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis](#), and the Center for American Progress, [States’ Essential Health Benefits Coverage Could Advance Maternal Health Equity](#).

The significance of licensing midwives and moving midwifery out from the underground market cannot be understated. While Big Medicine would like nothing more than for midwifery to disappear, growing coalitions of grassroots advocates and midwife supporters will persist in their statewide licensing campaigns.

“But for the work to restore the legality of midwives in one statehouse after another, in state after state across the U.S., we would not be in a position for midwifery and community birth to be recognized by studies like this as the preferred options to help improve the shameful maternal mortality rate in the U.S.,” Susan Jenkins, JD, Big Push Steering Committee member and Legal Counsel, said. “On International Day of the Midwife, we are focused on state midwife societies and state consumer advocates who have been pushing for decades, even before our work and this movement took the name The Big Push for Midwives Campaign.

(more)

Where's My Midwife? That is the Question on International Day of the Midwife.

"The Big Push, a national mutual-aid coalition of those state groups, just wants to take a moment to reflect on the fact that, but for licensed status now in 35+ states and D.C., with Illinois poised to be added, studies like these could not, and would not, talk about licensed midwives as viable options, much less the best hope for improvement, in maternity care," Jenkins said. "That state tally represents years and years of hard-fought grassroots campaigns against organized Big Medicine and other opponents, including hospitals, trial lawyers, organized nursing, even some state agencies. The public education and advocacy provided by these state midwife societies and state consumer advocates has not only improved access to community midwives and birth centers, but has also created a public dialogue about midwifery and birth, consisting of public information, growing media coverage, and studies and reports like these. We know midwifery is the answer, but the Aspen Group and the Center for American Progress would not have learned that midwifery is the answer, or even considered community-based midwifery as a viable option, if U.S. midwives were still illegal and underground."

BACKGROUND ON CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIVES (CPMs)

The Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) credential was developed in the late 1980s and was first issued in 1994 by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) to midwives with specialized training and expertise in providing safe, skilled maternity care in community birth settings. CPMs are the only U.S. midwives whose educational standards require them to undergo specialized clinical training in out-of-hospital settings as a condition of national certification. Many CPMs have encountered discrimination or exclusion from licensure despite being qualified by their training and education.

BACKGROUND ON THE BIG PUSH FOR MIDWIVES CAMPAIGN

Launched in 2008, [The Big Push for Midwives Campaign](#) educates about the need for regulation and license laws for CPMs in all 50 U.S. States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands. In states where CPMs are regulated through licensure, fully integrated into the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) Continuum of Care, and covered in public and private insurance plans, those families enjoy better access to care and better outcomes than in states where CPMs are either unregulated or forbidden to practice. In U.S. states and territories where CPMs are not legally authorized to practice, they are at risk of criminal prosecution for practicing medicine or nursing without a license, which drives the practice of midwifery underground and creates barriers to access for women seeking maternity care. The Big Push supports the courageous leaders of state coalitions of midwives and consumers. From public education and advocacy for CPM legislation, to licensure laws and implementation, to full integration of CPMs into a community's RMNCH Continuum of Care, to coverage in public and private insurance plans, the Big Push holds a new best-practices, evidence-based vision of U.S. maternity care: better outcomes for moms and babies as a result of expanded access to CPMs and the full range of birth options. [Donations to the Big Push](#) are helping to build back midwifery and community birth in the U.S. and increase access to more birth options, CPMs, and out-of-hospital birth and maternity care. The Big Push is a fiscally sponsored project of the Sustainable Markets Foundation, a registered 501(c)(3) organization in New York, NY.

BACKGROUND ON THE WHERE'S MY MIDWIFE? INITIATIVE

The [Where's My Midwife?](#) initiative includes [Where's My Midwife? A Podcast](#) to share new voices and stories in the movement to make way for midwives, and cohosted by Steff Hedenkamp and Kirsti Kreutzer. In addition, the [Where's My Midwife? Crowdmap](#) provides visibility on where out-of-hospital midwifery care may be available to pregnant people. Midwives are invited to submit a report to the crowdmap to show their location in the PushNation, describe their credentials, license status, and the cities and counties they serve, as well as share their contact information and other helpful information. Pregnant people can review the map to see midwives near them. Only healthy, low-risk pregnancies are candidates for out-of-hospital birth with midwives who have capacity to provide maternity care in private homes and freestanding birth centers. The crowdmap enjoys the support of these organizations: [Birth Monopoly](#), [Birth Rights Bar Association \(BRBA\)](#), [Citizens for Midwifery \(CfM\)](#), [The Midwives Alliance of North America \(MANA\)](#), [The National Association of Certified Professional Midwives \(NACPM\)](#), and the [North American Registry of Midwives \(NARM\)](#).