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MOTHER-FRIENDLY CHILDBIRTH INITIATIVE GAINS MORE INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT -- CALLED "GOLD STANDARD"

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida- Calling the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative "a gold standard for maternity services", Denmark's Parenting and Childbirth organization recently announced their endorsement of this consensus document. Established in 1973, Parenting and Childbirth is an advocacy group in Denmark that brings together parents, parents-to-be and healthcare, maternity, and infant care professionals. The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI) developed by the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) has been recognized as an important evidence-based model of maternity care that improves birth outcomes and substantially reduces costs.

Karen MacLean, member of the Board of Parenting and Childbirth stated that "the idea to translate and possibly implement the 10 steps of the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI) in Denmark was born in the spring of 2003. " After representatives of Parenting and Childbirth met with the Danish Minister of Health, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, in Copenhagen, "we realized how different the health department's conceptions of good maternity services were," said MacLean.

"We wanted to have a gold standard with which to compare; an evidence-based ideal to strive for. Our mission is to fight for the right to choose, along with a variety of options to choose from, and to ensure that parents have the accurate information they need to make the right choices. The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative helps us to fulfill these goals. " The group is concerned that the quality of maternity services in Denmark is currently declining, as small - often baby-friendly hospitals - are closed, and funding to midwife services (such as individual visits and birthing classes) is cut.

Parenting and Childbirth is the only organization in Denmark devoted to supporting and helping breastfeeding mothers through networking, information and peer counseling. "The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative gives our advocacy group the evidence-based data, credibility and support to link the quality of maternity services to the quality of breastfeeding and to promote breastfeeding in Denmark," explained Karen MacLean.

Parenting and Childbirth has recently prepared a position paper for the National Health Service on the proposed guidelines concerning prenatal diagnostics, recommending

among other things that more research be carried out to ensure that evidence-based care is provided. "The MFCI," said MacLean, "is our guide for improving maternity care in Denmark."

The Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS), a United Nations recognized NGO, is a collaborative effort of numerous individuals, leading researchers, and more than 50 organizations representing over 90,000 members. Promoting a wellness model of maternity care that will improve birth outcomes and substantially reduce costs. CIMS developed the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative in 1996. A consensus document that has been recognized as an important model for improving the healthcare and well being of children beginning at birth, the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative has been translated into several languages and is gaining support around the world.

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