

Midwifery in Texas

- There are currently nearly 160 documented direct entry midwives practicing in Texas. (TDH Midwifery Program, 2003)
- In 1999, direct entry midwives attended 1,897 births in Texas. (TDH Vital Statistics Department, 2000)
- According to research studies, direct entry midwife-attended home births were accomplished with safety comparable to that of conventional births. In fact, physician-attended hospital birth has never been shown to be safer than midwife-attended home birth for woman with normal pregnancies. (Birth, 19997; American Journal of Public Health 1992)
- In the 1980's the Texas Department of Health conducted a six-year study about the safety of direct entry midwives. The study found that the infant mortality rate (deaths occurring less than 28 days following a live birth) is lower for midwives than for doctors. (Berstein & Bryant, TDH, 1990)
- In Western European countries midwives attend 70% of births. The World Health Organization states that the preferred location for most births is outside the hospital, either at home or in a birth center. (WHO, 1999)
- Midwives provide excellent prenatal care, with each visit averaging an hour and including extensive nutritional counseling and encouragement of healthy lifestyle in addition to the usual tests and analyses. The average length of a prenatal visit with an obstetrician is 6 minutes. (Arms, Birthing the Future, 1999)
- Risk screening is a crucial part of prenatal care with direct entry midwife and only those women who have had an uncomplicated pregnancy and are determined to be low—risk proceed with plans for a midwife-attended home birth.
- In Texas in 1997, 3,243 deliveries occurred in birthing centers. Birthing centers are licensed facilities where women deliver in a pleasant, homey, non-interventive setting. Direct entry midwives run the majority of birthing centers in Texas. (TDH Vital Statistics Department, 1998)
- In a recent year in Texas approximately 1 in 5 women (21.5%) received late or no prenatal care. Midwives could be an important part of the solution to this serious problem of health care accessibility. (TDH Division of Maternal and Child Health, 1999)