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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NATIONAL SUMMIT TO ADDRESS RISE IN U.S. MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE

March 17, 2011 (Dulles, VA) -- Between two and three women die every day during pregnancy and childbirth in the United States. On April 9th, The Healthy Mothers Healthy Birth Summit 2011 (www.healthymothershealthybirth.com) will bring experts from multiple disciplines, including physicians, researchers, universities, midwives, childbirth professionals, and advocacy groups to examine the rising maternal mortality rate in the US.

Setting aside all cultural, personal, and professional bias, this group of professionals and lay people will tackle an almost silent epidemic in the United States. The results from this working day will be a formal white paper recommendation that will be distributed widely across the country and YouTube documentaries of the day's events. The all day summit will take place at Shenandoah University's Dulles campus on April 9th, 2011.

National and international organizations such as Amnesty International, American College of Obstetrics & Gynecology, The White Ribbon Alliance, American College of Nurse Midwives, Midwives Alliance of North America, The Tatia Oden French Memorial Foundation, The Safe Motherhood Quilt Project, International Childbirth Education Association, Doulas of North America, The Organization of Labor Assistants for Birth Options & Resources, and Ricki Lake's MyBestBirth.com will be represented. Also, numerous universities including Shenandoah, Georgetown, Virginia Commonwealth, George Mason, and George Washington will be present. The summit will hear from midwives Ina May Gaskin and Jennie Joseph as they speak to their experiences combating maternal mortality. Recent research from Perinatologist and Perinatal Epidemiologist Dr. Marsden Wagner will also be presented. Participants are being added daily as the event continues to expand.

On Sunday April 10th, 2011, a rally, open to everyone, is scheduled at the U.S. Capitol to display The Safe Motherhood Quilt (www.rememberthemothers.org) and bring awareness to maternal mortality. Many participants from the HMHB Summit will be present, including midwife Ina May Gaskin. Maddy Oden, the founder of The Tatia Oden French Memorial Foundation (www.tatia.org) will speak about the loss of her daughter and granddaughter during childbirth.

The summit agenda, list of speakers, participants, sponsors, and up-to-date information about the summit can be found at www.healthymothershealthybirth.com. Limited seating and sponsorship opportunities are still available. More information about the Rally at the Capitol on Sunday, April 10th can also be found on the HMHB website. The HMHB summit is organized by the non-profit, grass-roots, consumer advocacy group Birth Matters Virginia, with the assistance and support of Shenandoah University.

ABOUT BIRTH MATTERS VIRGINIA: Birth Matters VA is a state-wide group formed in 2001 and run by consumers. We offer resources and events in our local communities via chapters, and present a prestigious award every year to two maternity care providers whom Virginia women vote as the most mother-friendly. For more information, contact Mari Stutzman Smith, 703-408-0911, mari@celebratedbirth.com or Sheryl Rivett, 540-454-1564, sherylrivett@mac.com.