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CIMS SHARES IMPORTANCE OF MOTHER-FRIENDLY CHILDBIRTH ON BREASTFEEDING SUCCESS AT NEW DELHI CONFERENCE

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida- Rae Davies, Executive Director for the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS) had the unique opportunity to share the benefits of the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI) model of maternity care on the promotion and support of breastfeeding at a New Delhi conference. She was a speaker at the Asia Pacific Conference on Breastfeeding and National Convention of the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) which took place in New Delhi, November 30 to December 3, 2003.

Davies presented "Birthing Practices and Companionship in Labor" which included the importance of labor support as it relates to the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) and breastfeeding. Mary Kroeger, CNM, Chair of CIMS International Committee, who had planned to speak on the "Impact of Birthing Practices on Breastfeeding," at the New Delhi event, was not able to attend. However, Kroeger's presentation was delivered by Rae Davies. She helped maternity health professionals understand the principles of the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative which provide the basis for the successful initiation of and likelihood of maintaining breastfeeding by promoting only need-based interventions, labor support, culturally competent care and support of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI).

The conference, which attracted over 500 participants, was a collaborate effort among several national health services to promote exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months, and continued breastfeeding to one year and beyond to help reduce rates of infant mortality. The main goal was to initiate action on strengthening of infant and young child feeding policies and programs, and to promote integrated early child development as outlined in the Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding jointly developed by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

Rae Davies commented, "The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative has reached every continent via the internet or through presentations at numerous conferences. It has been translated into at least seven languages. It doesn't matter where in the world babies are born, the issues are the same - birth

significantly impacts women. Unfortunately, the United States sets the global standard for maternity care worldwide and the consequence of that is unnecessary procedures and care practices during labor and birth that are not evidence-based. The message of the MFCI is crucial to correcting these problems, and it is being received with global acceptance and support. "

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