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**PHYSICIANS INTRODUCE
MOTHER-FRIENDLY CHILDBIRTH INITIATIVE IN BRAZIL**

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida- The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative (MFCI) has been introduced as a model of maternity care to help improve the quality and outcomes of childbirth services in Brazil. Daphne Rattner, MD, MPH, PhD. is promoting the MFCI, a consensus document developed by the Coalition for Improving Maternity Services (CIMS).

Dr. Rattner, a public health physician and researcher at the State Institute of Health (Instituto de Saúde) in São Paulo, Brazil stated, "We have an outrageous under-reported maternal mortality rate and a very high perinatal mortality rate. Quality of care is a very important issue. Our cesarean section rates reach 100% in some hospitals and usually private hospitals display rates above 70%. Pre-natal care is universally available, but the average number of visits is very low. The Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative is very clear. It addresses both of my main concerns: improving outcomes in our country and the way we treat childbearing women. We often see institutionalized violence in our health care system. Women are often disrespected and not listened to. The violence is verbal, psychological and sometimes even physical."

One of three coordinators of the Brazilian Network for the Humanization of Childbirth (ReHuNa) Conference in November of 2000, Dr. Rattner explained, "I have distributed the MFCI at several events that I have organized. The Ten Steps has also become a guide for women who are willing to have a more natural childbirth."

Dr. Rattner will be attending the CIMS second annual Mother-Friendly Childbirth Forum and council meeting in Reston, Virginia, February 26, 2004. She hopes to bring back to Brazil an exchange of information and ideas to help with strategic planning of maternity services in Brazil. "I also plan to discuss the possibility of having CIMS members give talks in our country," Dr. Rattner added.

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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.

