This statement was developed in response to serious and continuing problems with maternity care in the United States, including:

- The United States is the only wealthy industrialized nation that does not guarantee access to essential health care for all pregnant women and infants. Many women, especially those with low incomes, lack access to adequate maternity care.

- A large body of scientific research shows that many widely used maternity care practices that involve risk and discomfort are of no benefit to low-risk women and infants. On the other hand, some practices that clearly offer important benefits are not widely available in U.S. hospitals.

- Many women do not receive adequate information about benefits and risks of specific procedures, drugs, tests, and treatments, or about alternatives.

- Childbearing women frequently are not aware of their legal right to make health care choices on behalf of themselves and their babies, and do not exercise this right.

We must ensure that all childbearing women have access to information and care that is based on the best scientific evidence now available, and that they understand and have opportunities to exercise their right to make health care decisions. Women whose rights are violated need access to legal or other recourse to address their grievances.
This article appeared in **The legal system would probably uphold these rights.** At this time in the United States, childbearing women are legally entitled to these rights. Every woman has the right to decide collaboratively with caregivers when she and her baby will leave the birth site for home, based on their conditions and circumstances.** Every woman has the right to virtually uninterrupted contact with her newborn from the moment of birth, as long as she and her baby are healthy and do not need care that requires separation.** Every woman has the right to freedom of movement during labor, unencumbered by tubes, wires, or other apparatus. She also has the right to give birth in the position of her choice.* Every woman has the right to receive full advance information about risks and benefits of all interventions that are reasonably available methods for relieving pain during labor and birth, including methods that do not require the use of drugs. She has the right to choose which methods will be used and to change her mind at any time.* Every woman has the right to receive continuous social, emotional, and physical support during labor and birth from a caregiver who has been trained in labor support.** Every woman has the right to have family members and friends of her choice present during all aspects of her maternity care.** Every woman has the right to receive maternity care that is appropriate to her cultural and religious background and to receive information in a language in which she can communicate.* Every woman has the right to unrestricted access to all available records about her pregnancy, labor, birth, postpartum care, and infant; to obtain a full copy of these records; and to receive help in understanding them, if necessary.* Every woman has the right to be informed if her caregivers wish to enroll her or her infant in a research study. She should receive full information about all known and possible benefits and risks of participation, and she has the right to decide whether to participate, free from coercion and without negative consequences.* Every woman has the right to accept or refuse procedures, drugs, tests, and treatments and to have her choices honored. She has the right to change her mind.* (This established legal right has been challenged in a number of recent cases.) Every woman has the right to receive health care before, during, and after pregnancy and childbirth. The Twenty Rights of Childbearing Women

1. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Chiropractic
2. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Nutrition
3. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Dental Care
5. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Skin Care
6. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Gynecological Care
13. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Emergency Care
15. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Palliative Care
17. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Palliative Care
18. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Palliative Care
19. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Palliative Care
20. Expectant Parent’s Guide to Palliative Care

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