

*American College of Nurse-Midwives survey finds that health providers are not adequately communicating with women about their birth control options, methods*

SILVER SPRING, Md., Oct. 9, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Despite the broad range of options available to women for birth control and family planning, a survey of more than 1200 US women between 18 and 45 released today by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) shows that women do not feel knowledgeable about many of these options and have harmful misperceptions about their effectiveness. The survey also found that many women aren't receiving the information they need from their health providers to properly use their prescribed method of birth control.

Key findings from the survey include:

- The top methods of birth control women reported using were birth control pills (27%), condoms (20%), and withdrawal (13%).
- After abstinence (70%), only a little more than half of the women said they were very knowledgeable about condoms (55%) and less than half of the women said they were very knowledgeable about birth control pills (49%), the withdrawal method (43%), and tubal ligation (28%).
- Only 17% percent of women said they were very knowledgeable about birth control implants, and 21% of women said they were very knowledgeable about intrauterine devices (IUDs), both of which are recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as the most effective form of birth control, with fewer than 1 in 100 pregnancies occurring in women who use an implant or IUDs.
- Birth control pills were ranked by 57% of respondents as the most effective form of birth control, followed by vasectomy (49%), tubal ligation (46%), and condoms (male or female, 43%).
- Forty percent of women surveyed said they did not receive in-depth counsel or information from their health provider on how to use the type of birth control they were prescribed.

"These data show a clear correlation between what women perceive to be the most effective types of birth control and what types they are actually using. Unfortunately, in many cases these perceptions are not entirely accurate and are not supported by the evidence," said ACNM President Ginger Breedlove, CNM, PhD, FACNM. "Women deserve complete and practical information delivered in positive, respectful conversations by an engaging health care

professional. If we can create an environment of healthy dialogue and shared decision making, we can help change perceptions so women make educated choices that are best suited to their needs."

Midwives are uniquely positioned to address this knowledge and service gap in birth control and family planning for US women. While there are a full range of health care providers who offer birth control and family planning services, Breedlove said midwives are experts in this area and are an underutilized resource. Midwives serve as partners in their clients' health care, and provide personalized services tailored to each woman's unique needs—a care style that is especially suited to assist women in making important birth control and family planning decisions.

To find out more about how midwives can address this gap and to access more information on study findings and infographics on the data, visit: <http://ourmomentoftruth.midwife.org/OMOT-Contraception-and-Family-Planning>

SOURCE American College of Nurse-Midwives