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For Immediate Release

OVERLOOK HOSPITAL OFFERS CALM BIRTH METHOD IN LABOR AND DELIVERY

SUMMIT, NJ, FEBRUARY 20, 2009 – Atlantic Health's Overlook Hospital offers the Calm Birth method in the Labor and Delivery unit of the Frank and Mimi Walsh Maternity Center.

Calm Birth is a complementary method of childbirth developed by Robert Newman. Following the completion of a twenty year apprenticeship with Tibetan doctors and meditation teachers, Mr. Newman was authorized to teach. His first endeavor involved working with patients, who were experiencing unrelieved pain (for example those who had advanced stages of cancer or AIDS). He taught health care providers and patients a method he called Calm Healing. As he continued his work, he realized that this self care method could be applied to childbirth. With input from childbirth professionals over several years, the Calm Birth method was born.

Calm Birth has its roots in meditative science and mind/body medicine. The three practices which make up the Calm Birth method consist of a reclining progressive relaxation, and two sitting meditations. These practices combine centuries-old wisdom with modern medical understanding of stress reduction and healing. Meditation practices have been used successfully in oncology, cardiovascular care and pain management for more than 30 years to reduce stress, anxiety and pain and improve function of the endocrine, immune and nervous systems. The benefits of meditation and neuromuscular release have been documented in more than 25,000 studies worldwide. Calm Birth has been taught and practiced in the western United States for many years and in New Jersey for more than a year.

In addition to releasing tension, the practices give a pregnant woman full oxygenation, increased energy and improved ability to manage pain during labor and childbirth. Other benefits of Calm Birth used before, during or after birth include decreased blood pressure and feelings of anxiety or fear, normalized heart rate, along with increased immune and nervous system function, oxytocin and endorphin levels, and sense of well-being. Moms feel relaxed, energized and empowered in their ability to experience the challenges of birth and parenting.

Anyone can learn Calm Birth – all it takes is patience and a little perseverance. Moms and their partners are encouraged to learn the practices as early in the pregnancies as possible and to practice often in order to experience the maximum benefit.

One of the best things about the Calm Birth method is that it is complementary. That means the practices may be used along with other tools such as medications, other methods of labor support or relaxation techniques. Calm Birth is beneficial regardless of desired or actual birth experience. It works as well with medicated, Cesarean or natural childbirth.

(more)

T H E P A S S I O N T O L E A D

Even if mom finds that she does not want to use it during childbirth, Calm Birth is a wonderful tool for stress reduction during pregnancy and in the postpartum period. In fact, the techniques can be used for self care throughout a person's life.

An additional resource for after the baby is born, is the Calm Mother audio-guide CD. The practices on this CD can be used to ease the transition into parenthood, assist a woman in healing both physically and emotionally from the current or past birth experience and enhance bonding between the infant and parents.

So how does a pregnant mom learn Calm Birth? First she and her partner attend a three hour class (partners are fully involved in learning and practicing Calm Birth, however the mom is welcome to attend on her own if her partner is unavailable). Following a brief welcome, the Calm Birth certified teacher will discuss the background and benefits of the method as well as meditation and neuromuscular release in general. This is particularly useful for those moms and partners who have never had any experience with complementary practices.

The teacher then introduces the students to each of the three practices using a beautifully narrated CD audio-guide. The first practice, Practice of Opening, involves focusing on and relaxing each part of the body and is done in a reclining position. Womb Breathing and Giving and Receiving, the second and third practices, are sitting meditations accompanied by abdominal breathing (students are welcome to sit on the floor or on chairs).

The Calm Birth teacher acts as a resource throughout the class to explain concepts and answer questions. At the program's conclusion, students are given the Calm Birth CD and encouraged to continue to listen and practice throughout the remainder of their pregnancies. Often they are given the option of attending future Calm Birth classes (at no charge) to continue to work with the teacher during their pregnancy to further their understanding and practice of the method.

What happens when the big day arrives? Moms and partners use their Calm Birth CD at home during labor and bring it with them to the hospital or birthing center (they may need to bring a CD player as well if not provided). Continued use of the Calm Birth practices is recommended whenever appropriate during labor, birth and postpartum. Calm Birth has multiple benefits in a variety of circumstances.

For more information about Calm Birth at Overlook Hospital, contact Parent Education at 908-522-2946 or email overlook.parented@atlantichealth.org.

For more information about Overlook Hospital, visit www.atlantichealth.org.

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