



## Holistic Moms Applaud Open Conversation about Childbirth

**Caldwell, NJ** – The [Holistic Moms Network](#) (HMN), a national non-profit organization, applauds Self Magazine and writer Taffy Brodesser-Akner for asking the question “Who Controls Childbirth?” in the July 2010 issue. The personal, thoughtful piece explains one woman’s exploration into her traumatic first birth and her desire to reexamine her experience as she prepares for another child. Her personal journey highlights the growing holistic birth movement spearheaded by such advocates as midwife Ina May Gaskin and talk show host Ricki Lake.

It is the opinion of the Holistic Moms Network that the movement toward reclaiming birth is not about judging birthing women and evaluating their decisions but about exposing the culture of birth that has been created here in the United States – one that is based in fear and uncertainty and that does not afford women the basic right to choose when, where, and how to birth their children. The continuously rising C-section rates in the United States reveal an opportunity to question the institutions involved in the birthing process, not to question or criticize the mothers. Women are not provided with viable options for natural childbirth and choices that fall outside of the increasingly medical model of childbirth in this country are not supported by the existing healthcare system. Instead, women’s voices are disrespected and many women, such as Ms. Brodesser-Akner, experience traumatic birth at the hands of professionals who disregard their emotional and psychological desires about their birth experiences.

“At the Holistic Moms Network,” explains Nancy Massotto, Ph.D., “we encourage women to become informed about the risks and benefits of all healthcare procedures, including those prevalent in childbirth practices. But without a fundamental shift in how we think about birth and how the institutions designed to support women through this natural process practice, women will have a hard time reclaiming the birth experience.”

The World Health Organization and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services agree that, for the safety of both mothers and babies, a country’s C-section rate should not exceed 10-15%. The American medical institutions are not heeding these recommendations, with recent rates rising to more than 31% in 2007. A 2002 study published in the [British Medical Journal](#) indicates that medical intervention has become commonplace in childbirth in developed countries “without evidence of effectiveness”, not as a result of medical necessity but rather due to the attitude, support, and practice of healthcare institutions.

Celebrity spokesperson for the organization, Mayim Bialik, who was interviewed for the article agrees: “I am honored to be a part of the ongoing discussion about natural and holistic options for childbirth, and I hope to see the day very soon when the U.S. achieves the low infant and maternal mortality rates recommended by the W.H.O. and [UNICEF](#) that many other Western countries have accomplished. I applaud communities that support a variety of opinions, especially when those opinions converge to promote healthy babies, healthy moms, and a healthy understanding of the value of natural childbirth.”

“We hope this article opens up the door for a wider conversation about respecting the desires of mothers while supporting them with the best care available,” says Dr. Massotto. “As an organization, we recognize that support is invaluable for parents at every stage, and birth is no exception.”

### About the Holistic Moms Network

The Holistic Moms Network is a non-profit organization connecting parents who are passionate about holistic health and green living. HMN’s mission is to support and educate parents about natural living and to help them explore holistic options that are available to them. The network has more than 100 Chapters across the United States where parents connect, learn, and build a sense of community. Through local meetings, a dynamic online community, an informative e-magazine, and more, members build strong support networks and often share life-changing advice and information that empowers them to create positive change within their families and their communities. For more information visit the organization’s website at [www.holisticmoms.org](http://www.holisticmoms.org) .