## Conference Abstract and Reference List Presentation

## Complementary Therapies in Aiding Spontaneous Vaginal Birth

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Massage therapy and relaxation techniques have been used for centuries by many different cultures to assist women in facilitating a calm, holistic birthing environment. There is a known correlation between massage and increased oxytocin production in women, therefore a conclusion can be made in regard to routinely bringing these therapies into birthing settings to assist in reducing pain and promoting a spontaneous vaginal birth.

My rational for this policy is to facilitate and encourage women to be as comfortable and confident in their bodies as possible and assist women in managing the pains of labour in a constructive and present way through breathing exercises and massage. These complementary therapies have the potential of reducing the need for pharmacological analgesia and promote spontaneous vaginal birth. This would be conducted via a licensed massage therapist providing in-person education for midwives wishing to develop these skills in a certified foundational workshop. This can then be further developed with more external training.

This policy aims to incorporate complementary therapies into birthing spaces to increase maternal satisfaction, coping mechanisms and increase the maternal pain threshold and therefore reducing the need for pharmacological pain relief. This would give the woman autonomy over her body to manage the difficulties of labour, as well as decrease the cost and pressures currently faced by operating theatres and pharmacological management of pain in these settings. Furthermore, it would upskill midwives into expanding their knowledge of non-analgesic pain management and add more to their toolbox of supporting women in birthing settings.

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