

December 7, 2010

Dear Fellows:

This is to follow up the many comments that have been posted on this list about the transition to time-limited certificates for those midwives certified before 1996. The ACNM Board of Directors (BOD) met with Barbara Graves, President of AMCB and Carrie Bright, their Executive Director at our meeting this weekend. We had ACNM's legal counsel present and it was a very informative discussion of the issues. The diverse comments and perspectives raised by many of you in this forum and privately with other members of the BOD and me were helpful and illustrative. Thank you.

Based on your feedback, we raised a number of concerns with AMCB, and Barbara has agreed to explore these and get back to us. We are also working on a formal letter of follow up to her and AMCB documenting the conversation and to request further information. We will communicate our discussions with AMCB, with our members and all those affected by these changes.

We agree that important questions have been raised that require further exploration and regret the distress this transition has generated for some of our members. However, it is critically important that we as a profession understand the major consumer and regulatory movements that are driving this policy. While the call for more rigorous certification maintenance requirements for all health professionals dates back 20 years or more, this concept received a major push forward following the 2001 publication of the Institute of Medicine's *Crossing the Quality Chasm*. Now, nearly 10 years later, this movement has advanced to the point in which health care professions that do not adequately require recertification risk being discredited; consumer advocacy groups are calling for tougher state laws; state regulatory bodies have started to threaten revocation of licensure for those with lifetime certifications; and certification boards who do not require rigorous assessment of continuing competency are being scrutinized and risk obsolescence. We believe that these trends can no longer be ignored, and that they have a potential impact on all CNMs and CMs and the integrity and stature of our profession.

In that context, the ACNM BOD supports AMCB's decision to require time-limited certifications for all CNMs and CMs in active clinical practice, in order to preserve public safety; protect CNM/CM's eligibility for State licensure; maximize eligibility for government-program payments for CNM/CM services; safeguard a positive reputation for ACNM, AMCB, and the profession of midwifery; and limit otherwise potentially-extensive liability exposure for AMCB and ACNM.

ACNM's role is to represent the interests of our members and it is crucial that we maintain an open dialogue with AMCB to address the concerns our members have raised. Of these, one is how the midwife is recognized who is not engaged in active clinical practice, but continues to do policy, research, and/or political work for the profession and would like to use a nationally recognized midwifery credential to support those efforts. There is also the issue of what the midwife calls her/himself who is retired. This has much to do with certification trademark law and we discussed potential ideas with AMCB and they will be exploring these concerns further for us.

We will be back in touch with you and all of our members as we learn more. In the meantime, thank you again for your passion, contributions, and commitment to our profession in the past, present, and future!

I wish you all a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

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