



POSITION STATEMENT

Independent Midwifery Practice

The American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) maintains that safe, quality health care can best be provided to women and their infants when policy makers develop laws and regulations that permit certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) to provide independent midwifery care within their scopes of practice and to foster consultation, collaborative management, or seamless referral and transfer of care when indicated. It is the position of the ACNM that

- Midwifery practice is the independent management of women's health care that focuses particularly on common primary care issues; gynecologic and family planning services; preconception care; care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period; and care of the normal newborn during the first 28 days of life.¹
- The practice of midwifery occurs in health care systems that facilitate consultation, collaborative management, or referral as indicated by the health status of the woman or newborn.
- In independent midwifery practice, CNMs and CMs use knowledge, skills, judgment, and authority to provide health care for women in accordance with ACNM *Standards for the Practice of Midwifery*.²

Background

Independent practice is not defined by the place of employment, the employee-employer relationship, requirements for physician co-signature or collaborative agreement, or the method of reimbursement for services. Further, *independent* should not be interpreted to mean *alone*, as there are clinical situations in which any prudent practitioner would seek the assistance of another qualified practitioner.

Collaboration is the process whereby health care professionals jointly manage care.³ The goal of collaboration is to share authority while providing quality care within each individual's professional scope of practice. Successful collaboration is a way of thinking and relating that requires knowledge, open communication, mutual respect, commitment to the provision of quality care, trust, and the ability to share responsibility. The American College of Nurse Midwives along with other professional organizations such as the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology affirm that provision of healthcare is optimized when licensed, independent providers collaborate to provide quality, team based care.^{4,5}

REFERENCES

1. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Statutory and regulatory language differentiating scope of practice/practice authority by practice setting. <http://www.midwife.org/ACNM/files/ACNMLibraryData/UPLOADFILENAME/000000000303/Statutory-Regulatory-Language-Policy-9-2016.pdf>. Published September 2016. Accessed October 23, 2017.

2. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Standards for the practice of midwifery. http://www.midwife.org/ACNM/files/ACNMLibraryData/UPLOADFILENAME/00000000051/Standards_for_Practice_of_Midwifery_Sept_2011.pdf. Approved September 24, 2011. Accessed October 23, 2017.
3. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Collaborative agreement between physicians and certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives. <http://www.midwife.org/ACNM/files/ACNMLibraryData/UPLOADFILENAME/00000000057/Collaborative%20Agreement%20between%20Physicians%20and%20CNMs.CMs%20Dec%20%202011.pdf>. Approved December 2011. Accessed October 23, 2017.
4. American College of Nurse-Midwives & American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists. Joint Statement of Practice Relations between Obstetrician-Gynecologists and Certified Nurse Midwives/Certified Midwives. <http://www.midwife.org/ACNM/files/ACNMLibraryData/UPLOADFILENAME/00000000224/ACNM.ACOG%20Joint%20Statement%203.30.11.pdf> Approved February 2011. Accessed November 9, 2017.
5. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Taskforce on Collaborative Practice. Collaboration in Practice: Implementing Team Based Care. <https://www.acog.org/Resources-And-Publications/Task-Force-and-Work-Group-Reports/Collaboration-in-Practice-Implementing-Team-Based-Care>. Published 2016. Accessed November 9, 2017.

Note. Midwifery as used throughout this document refers to the education and practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) who have been certified by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) or the American Midwifery Certification Board, Inc. (AMCB).

Source: Clinical Practice Committee

Approved by ACNM Board of Directors: February, 1995

Revised: September, 2004, February 2012, December 2017