



POSITION STATEMENT

Statutory and Regulatory Language Differentiating Scope of Practice/Practice Authority by Practice Setting

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the standard setting professional association representing certified nurse-midwives (CNMs®) and certified midwives (CMs®) in the United States (U.S.). The mission of the ACNM is to support midwives and advance the practice of midwifery in order to achieve optimal health for women through the lifespan. This mission requires the development of a diverse, sustainable midwifery workforce, facilitated by appropriate statute and regulation that establishes midwifery as a standard of care and increases equitable access to midwifery care for all women.

ACNM affirms the following:

- Midwifery practice is governed by a set of criteria and processes iterated in statute and rule which define practice authority based on education, certification and professional standards, not on practice setting or site of birth.
- Midwifery regulation is guided by the framework defined by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM).¹ The ICM regulatory framework supports midwives to work autonomously within their full scope of practice to ensure public safety and access to a competent and autonomous midwifery workforce. By raising the status of midwives through statute and regulation, the standard of care and the health of mothers and babies are improved.
- Statute and/or regulation for CNMs and CMs in the U.S. should be based solely upon the definition and scope of practice established by the ACNM *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice* and *Standards for the Practice of Midwifery*, which are consistent with or exceed the global competencies and standards for the practice of midwifery as defined by the International Confederation of Midwives.^{2, 3, 4}
- ACNM is opposed to statutory and/or regulatory language that differentiates allowed scope of practice and/or practice authority based on birth site or practice setting rather than credential.

Background

All CNMs and CMs earn graduate degrees, complete a midwifery education program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME), and pass a national certification examination administered by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) to receive their professional designation of CNM/CM.⁵ To maintain the designation of CNM or CM, midwives must be recertified every 5 years through AMCB and meet specific continuing education requirements.⁶

Midwifery as practiced by CNMs and CMs is the independent management of women's health care that encompasses a full range of primary health care services from adolescence beyond

menopause, including common primary care issues, gynecologic and family planning services, preconception care, care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period, care of the normal newborn during the first 28 days of life, and treatment of male partners for sexually transmitted infections. These services are provided in partnership with women and families in diverse settings such as ambulatory care clinics, private offices, community and public health systems, homes, hospitals and birth centers.^{3, 4, 5}

Independent midwifery enables CNMs and CMs to utilize knowledge, skills, judgment, and authority in the provision of primary health services for women while maintaining accountability for the management of health care in accordance with ACNM standards. CNMs and CMs practice in collaboration and consultation with other health care professionals within the context of the larger health care system.⁷ ACNM and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists agree that the highest quality and most seamless systems of care are those that foster collaboration among licensed, independent providers.^{8, 9}

Women have the right to access high quality care by providers authorized to practice autonomously to the fullest extent of their education and certification in any setting or birth site. Nearly half of all U.S. counties have no obstetricians or midwives who provide maternity care services, and there are worsening shortages of maternity care providers nationwide.¹⁰ ACNM remains committed to expanding access to high value, high quality women's health care services, which can be achieved only when a qualified workforce is fully utilized. Proposals to regulate midwifery practice based on practice setting or birth site rather than provider credentials contradict international standards on midwifery regulation, national midwifery certification, professional practice standards, and expert recommendations creating unnecessary barriers to care for women and families.^{11, 12, 13}

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Source: ACNM Board of Directors

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