



NEWS RELEASE

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Leading Midwifery Organization Releases Updated Clinical Bulletin on Home Birth

American College of Nurse-Midwives recommends practices based on scientific evidence, shared decision-making with women and families

Silver Spring, MD – The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) recently released its updated clinical bulletin on the practice of home birth from the midwifery perspective of care. Now available for early viewing in the [Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health \(JMWH\)](#), the evidence-based bulletin, [Midwifery Provision of Home Birth Services](#), outlines the science to support the optimal care and treatment of women and newborns in the home birth setting.

The bulletin reviews the current science on caring for women and families who plan to give birth at home, and provides guidance on roles and responsibilities for midwives and the family they care for, supports a woman's autonomy through shared decision-making, and informed consent. Informed by the [2014 UK NICE Guidelines on Intrapartum Care](#) and other recent studies, the bulletin highlights the unique qualities of home birth and is intended to inform midwifery practices, including the process of an ongoing health assessment and choosing the birth site. The bulletin also reviews best practice models to support the transfer of women, if necessary, from one birth site to another.

“ACNM's first step in updating this bulletin was to appoint a Task Force to review all current, available scientific evidence on home birth, and then develop new guidelines that would assist midwives in continuing to provide our high-quality care,” said ACNM President Ginger Breedlove, CNM, PhD, APRN, FACNM. “For women who are considering home birth in consultation with midwives, it's vital that we continually evaluate and examine the science in this constantly evolving area to determine the most appropriate care. Midwives working in the home birth setting need up to date, evidenced-based information so they can support women, while engaging them in informed decision-making about their birth setting.”

While the bulletin offers home birth recommendations, Breedlove said each woman's particular health history and circumstances, as well as community resources, and the skills and clinical practice guidelines of the midwife, will ultimately guide consideration of a mother's birth site.

She also noted that because of the changing scientific landscape investigating home birth, this bulletin should not be used to inform legislation or regulation.

Andrea Christianson, CNM, MS, and chair of ACNM's Home Birth Section of the Division of Standards and Practice, said, "The clinical bulletin will aid midwives in assisting families with navigating the shared decision making process. It's vital that families are fully informed about their choices of where and with whom to give birth. As midwives, we have a responsibility to provide current evidence to inform that decision process, including resources about birth settings in the local area, which may impact women's choices. In supporting a woman's right to autonomy, we must then respect the choices she makes that are right for her and her newborn."

This fall, ACNM also released another clinical bulletin on fetal monitoring, [Intermittent Auscultation for Fetal Heart Rate Surveillance](#), which is also available for early viewing in *JMWH*. The bulletin examines the evidence for the use of intermittent, rather than continuous, auscultation and provides recommendations on monitoring technique and interpretation, and how to document the procedure. It calls for intermittent fetal monitoring as the standard of care for women with low risk births.

Both bulletins are strategically aligned with ACNM's [Healthy Birth Initiative](#), the [Reducing Primary Cesareans](#) project, and the College's national and state quality improvement work with the [Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health](#), all of which focus on promoting evidence-based practices to optimize maternal and infant health.

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The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association that represents certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) in the United States. ACNM promotes excellence in midwifery education, clinical practice, and research. With roots dating to 1929, our members are primary care providers for women throughout the lifespan, with a special emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health. ACNM provides research, administers and promotes continuing education programs, establishes clinical practice standards, and creates liaisons with state and federal agencies and members of Congress to increase the visibility and recognition of midwifery care.

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