

ACNM 2016 Student Report

Introduction

The 2016 Students and New Midwives Section would like to thank the ACNM Board of Directors and members for considering the student input on priority concerns for midwives across the United States. Liaisons from each of the 38 midwifery programs have worked together to identify areas of interest and concern for midwifery students. After careful evaluation of responses to a survey from most programs, four common themes have emerged: communication and engagement within ACNM; education; transition into clinical practice and support of new graduates; and diversity and inclusion.

We would like to acknowledge efforts on behalf of the college to communicate with and involve students in activities of ACNM. These include the “You are ACNM” webinar and the “New Midwives Webinar,” and the “New Graduate Orientation” education session held this morning. Our current students, who are the future midwifery leaders, scholars, and political advocates, are already involved in ACNM at the affiliate and national level.

We collectively thank you for taking the time to listen our concerns and to consider the suggested changes intended to bring us all closer to ACNM's vision of a accessible midwifery care for all.

Communication and Student Engagement

As students, there is abundant optimism and energy towards becoming a new professional. We recommend that the committees, divisions, and leadership of ACNM take the opportunity to tap into this resource and foster the growth and engagement of future midwives. Some opportunities exist in the engagement of students in affiliate, division and committee service, and in enlightening student members on the structure and functions of ACNM as a whole. However, we suggest student specific positions within each division, encouraging full student representation. Additionally, affiliate chapters should be encouraged to include a student representative in their governance structure. These changes would encourage a structured introduction to leadership and provide a greater student voice to the organization.

We believe the establishment of a student sponsorship program, which would pair experienced and future midwives, may be highly beneficial to bridge student engagement, foster community building and connection, and encourage leadership and service. Organized at the affiliate level, this program would establish connections between experienced and future midwives, defray student membership cost, and provide a supportive introduction to the organization.

Communication is a priority. The ACNM website, social media, the Student and New Midwives Section, and Student Liaisons to midwifery education programs all represent avenues to disseminate information to all members. Fully connecting these resources, making them user-friendly, and keeping them up to date will encourage greater student involvement and perhaps encourage a greater percentage of student midwives to join the organization.

There are also opportunities to promote midwifery as a career and midwives as primary care providers in the care of women across the lifespan. The general

public lacks knowledge about the scope and purview of certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives as opposed to licensed or professional midwives. Clarification of these distinctions, and promoting a midwife for all women, will encourage greater dissemination of advanced practice midwifery services and greater participation in the personalized holistic care midwives provide. With these efforts, the profession cannot help but grow, increasing options for future midwives.

Education

We are grateful that ACNM is striving to address concerns regarding the shortage of preceptors and clinical placements. This is an ongoing issue that is critical to ensure the future of midwifery education. We request that problems related to securing clinical sites and preceptors for all programs be addressed. We also recommend addressing the issue of preceptor reimbursement which can lead to competition between midwifery programs. To address this issue, we request that ACNM continue to pursue legislative action to increase funding for midwifery education related to preceptor payments. In addition, we recommend involving students in the development of solutions to problems associated with preceptor shortages.

Secondly, we acknowledge the wide range of beliefs among ACNM members on the issue of abortion-related care. Many students have expressed a desire to learn unbiased pregnancy options counseling as part of basic core competencies and note inconsistencies across midwifery programs in curricular content. Curriculum should include termination procedure options, and how to make referrals as needed for individuals who choose termination of pregnancy. We request that ACNM provide supplemental learning modules and workshops for interested students to expand their knowledge and skills related to abortion care.

Lastly, of the 38 midwifery programs in the United States, 19 certified-nurse midwifery and 2 certified midwifery programs accept students with educational backgrounds in fields other than nursing. In order to address the educational needs of direct entry students and the hostility many such students face when entering the clinical setting, we recommend that ACNM create a position statement in support of CNM direct entry and CM students. In addition, we believe there is a need to conduct and disseminate research on outcomes of care provided by graduates from CNM and CM programs with backgrounds other than nursing. We hope that research will identify possible individual educational needs of these students. With this information we can ensure that midwifery students from all backgrounds are accepted into practice as competent beginning providers.

Transition of New Midwives/ Clinical Practice

Students have recognized the need for more support from ACNM during the transition into practice. We are grateful for the career resources ACNM currently offers new midwives; however, it is our recommendation for the Board of Directors to consider these specific additions:

- Sample interview questions of what may be asked and what to ask as prospective midwives

- A link to previous presentations on prevention of burnout and self-care
- A link to the new midwives Facebook page and listserv
- Resources for billing and coding knowledge
- A list of what is available as an advanced certification for CNM/CM's
- A link to reasonable expectations for contract negotiation and a sample contract. Information currently available on the ACNM website provides topics to consider during contract negotiation but does not give insight to the appropriate expectations for areas such as safe scheduling, benefits, orientation, CEU reimbursement, liability insurance coverage/cost, etc.

These resources would not only inform, but empower new midwives to choose safe, quality employers, and set us up to thrive as we begin our career.

As future new graduate midwives, we believe the opportunity to connect with experienced midwives in a mentorship program would be invaluable. This program could be facilitated on the ACNM website or through a future match program, and would be separate from preceptorship. This program would be a nice extension of the previously mentioned sponsorship program which facilitated student awareness of and participation in ACNM. In addition, the students recommend the SANMS to facilitate an online platform for a new midwives support group, where new midwives can connect quarterly.

We heard earlier this week from Dr. Neel Shah about the impact an app can have. Wouldn't it be great if ACNM could say "there's an app for that"? We strongly recommend the development of a mobile app with ACNM recommendations, position statements and guidelines (similar to the NPWH or ACOG). The quick reference app could also include resources on emerging topics such as transcare, gender non-conforming patients, vaginal breech, and HRT. This comes from a desire for midwives to have a reference that is midwifery specific, rather than obstetric.

We believe the addition of these resources will make maintaining membership to ACNM more appealing to transitioning new midwives, and provide support to our newest additions to the profession.

Diversity and Inclusion

This year and for the past several years, students have voiced concerns related to diversification and inclusion within our professional organization. Last year, the strategic plan presented in "*Shifting the Frame*" called for "equal opportunities for active participation and leadership for all members." The College's dedication to identifying and breaking down barriers was heard. We, the student liaisons, call upon the ACNM to take the following direct actions:

First, in agreement with the motion presented by ACNM Fellow Patricia Loftman, we would like to see ACNM publicly encourage the authors of Varney's Midwifery to include a more robust and comprehensive introduction to midwifery history that includes the contributions of Midwives of Color. In order to address inconsistencies in education and training on diversity and inclusion, we would like to see diversity and inclusion curricula consistently incorporated into all 38 of the midwifery education programs and the Core Competencies.

Second, we support the motion presented by Kim Dau and the students at UCSF in a call for direct action within our college to prevent discrimination and racism within our clinical sites, educational systems, and annual meetings. Finally, we endorse the recent motion brought to the board in their March 2016 meeting that created a Gender Equity Task Force as part of a long-term plan to ensure the College is addressing issues of gender equity and inclusion. We envision a future in which all student midwives are provided education and professional support regarding comprehensive and inclusive reproductive health care.

In collective voice, we, the students of all 38 midwifery programs, believe that these motions are in alignment with the commitments the ACNM has already made towards cultivating a diverse and inclusive organization, in which all midwives can feel they are seen and respected. We welcome the opportunity to sit with you at the table and assist the board in moving forward with these action items.

Conclusion

In conclusion, what we heard loud and clear from midwifery students across the country is that we are eager to deepen our involvement in shaping a robust, visionary, forward-thinking and forward-acting College. We thank the ACNM for the opportunity to represent the students and new midwives and we know that careful consideration will be given to our recommendations. The Students and New Midwives Section looks forward to working together to help midwifery grow to meet ACNM's mission to advance the practice of midwifery in order to achieve optimal reproductive health for individuals and their families throughout the lifespan.

Respectively submitted by,

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Appendix

Diversity Resources

Author of report, title, year, retrieved from:

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Retrieved from:

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Holmes L.J. (2011). Into the Light of Day: Reflections on the History of Midwives of Color Within the American College of Nurse- Midwives.