



**For Immediate Release
December 13, 2016**

**Contact: Clare Lynam
240-485-1826**

**ACNM Commends Administration for Expanding Veterans Access to Care
through Full Practice Authority for Certified Nurse-Midwives**

SILVER SPRING, MD -- Lisa Kane Low, CNM, PhD, FACNM, FAAN, president of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), released the following statement today regarding the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' publishing of a final rule recognizing the full practice authority of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) facilities.

"While more and more women wear our nation's military uniform, women's health care has not been fully available in our VHA facilities. By authorizing CNMs to serve to their Full Practice Authority, the VHA is taking one more step toward making President Lincoln's promise to our veterans – to care for the one who has borne the battle – a reality for our women veterans, too.

"Hundreds of CNMs who are our members are veterans of our U.S. Armed Forces. They are among the nearly 8,000 members of the ACNM who stand ready to serve our veterans in the VHA. Today, I am reaching out to the VHA leadership to offer our national professional organization as their resource to connect the health needs of women veterans to the CNMs who can serve them and promote their health and wellness.

"While this is an important step, the work of ensuring our veteran's access to quality care remains unfinished. The rule does not recognize full practice authority for certified midwives (CMs) as ACNM recommended. Nor does it ensure full practice authority for all Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), such as certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) as was recommended by the Commission on Care, the Institute of Medicine, and many veterans groups. These omissions represent missed opportunities to ensure timely and safe care for America's veterans, and should be addressed."

Kate Green, CNM, PhD and chair of ACNM's Government Affairs Committee, said, "What we can accomplish as a team is amazing! My grateful thanks to the many ACNM members who urged the VHA to take action on behalf of midwives and the women we serve. The GAC and the ACNM national office will reach out to our members with additional messages to send the VHA as needed during the upcoming extended comment period. We are proud of our members' continued advocacy for women and midwifery."

- The rule was published in preview on Dec. 13, 2016: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2016-29950.pdf> . It takes effect 30 days after it is published in the Federal Register.
- The final rule followed a proposed rule published on December 14, 2016: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/12/14/2016-29950/advanced-practice-registered-nurses>
- ACNM submitted comments to that proposal: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=VA-2016-VHA-0011-37039>.
- ACNM also signed coalition comments: <https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=VA-2016-VHA-0011-113753>.

About ACNM

With nearly 7800 members, 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. www.midwife.org