



Friday, May 21, 2010

ACNM Decision to Become an Organizational Affiliate of the American Nurses Association

A statement from the ACNM Board of Directors

After much deliberation, the ACNM Board of Directors has accepted an invitation to become an Organizational Affiliate Member of the American Nurses Association. This strategic decision, approved at the December 2009 quarterly meeting of the ACNM Board, was based on the following rationale:

ACNM is a professional midwifery organization and our practice discipline is midwifery. However, at the current time most of our members are nurses and are educated in schools of nursing and regulated through state boards of nursing. As such, it is important to have a strong voice in the nursing community; to work collegially as key stakeholders in health care; to continue our promotion and enhancement of midwifery education, practice, and regulation; and to have a voice in the decisions of organized nursing (i.e. state boards of nursing), which will impact our members. We believe this relationship will work to our advantage by maximizing our position in the dialogue about midwifery in many venues.

President Obama's administration and Congress are making major changes in health care and we MUST influence those changes for the health of women and their families. ACNM would like to be at every health policy discussion in the United States. However, the current reality of national health policy debate is that ANA is sometimes the only nursing-related organization invited to the table. Although ACNM is often invited to meetings related to women's health care, we are not usually asked as *midwives* to discussions about primary care, health care reimbursement, or a variety of other health care related topics important to our practice. The ANA affiliation provides the opportunity to educate ANA and other nursing organizations about CNMs and CMs; it will enhance their ability to accurately present the roles and value of midwifery when we cannot be at the forum ourselves.

Moreover, ANA leadership has emphasized a desire to focus their resources and involvement by forwarding specific opportunities to Organizational Affiliates. In 2009 ANA became a critical player in health care reform. ACNM recognized that a stronger partnership could directly benefit all ACNM members—CNMs and CMs alike.

In addition to educating legislators and the general public about the profession of midwifery, we must also educate nurses about who we are and what we do. ANA represents 2.6 million nurses, the largest group of health care providers in the country. Nurses provide most of the bedside care for childbearing women and we must work together to change birth practices. The affiliation with ANA should provide significant opportunities to educate formal nursing organizations about the CM credential, and to help them understand that while many CNMs are educated in nursing, we practice midwifery.

Becoming an Organizational Affiliate Member of ANA expands ACNM's opportunities to *speak for midwifery* through the nomination of representatives to multiple venues. For example, we have been asked by ANA to send nominations to the *Independent Medicare Advisory Board*, whose purpose is to "make recommendations and develop proposals to extend Medicare solvency, reduce the rate of per capita Medicare spending, and improve quality of care in Medicare." This Board also makes annual recommendations on actions to improve quality and constrain the rate of cost growth in the private sector. This 15-member Board, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, will probably include one nurse. At

this time the potential to have a midwife on this board, as well as many other influential boards, is highly enhanced through our affiliation with ANA.

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, a group with whom we often partner and share common issues, is also a long-standing affiliate of ANA. Both the ANA and the AANA describe this relationship as productive and collaborative. The National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists is also an ANA Organizational Affiliate and ACNM understands that other advanced practice organizations are moving toward coming on board as well.

ACNM will continue to speak for and represent our membership – this will not be altered. As midwives we will continue to control our practice standards and other defining documents, and our well-respected national accreditation and certification process. Becoming an ANA Organizational Affiliate does not mean ACNM will agree with all ANA statements. For example, ACNM was invited to comment as an affiliate member on the ANA statement on the DNP. This is a good example of opportunities to share and clarify our positions and hopefully influence ANA. [Read ACNM's comments to ANA.](#)

In closing, ACNM works with many other organizations to fulfill our mission and strategic objectives, including ACOG, MANA, AWHONN, Childbirth Connection, and is part of a number of coalitions including the Coalition for Improved Maternity Care, and the Coalition for Patient Rights, as well as other informal coalitions that have provided significant benefit to ACNM members and women and families. ACNM has joined ANA as an Organizational Affiliate member for one year. We will evaluate the benefits of this membership at the end of the year to determine whether to continue this affiliation. We invite member input as the year unfolds to help us in that process.

[Read the ANA press release](#) about ACNM joining ANA as an Organizational Affiliate.