

Certification of Midwives

This document was developed to answer common questions regarding midwifery certification/recertification and the Certification Maintenance Program. This information will also direct you to other sources, most importantly the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB).

Historical Background

A national certification examination to confer the credential certified nurse-midwife (CNM®) was instituted by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) in 1971. ACNM administered the exam and verified credentials until 1991. In 1991, the ACNM Certification Council (ACC) was separately incorporated and assumed the responsibility for the exam and the issuance of certificates. In 1997, ACC issued the first certified midwife (CM) credential. Today ACC, known since 2005 as the **American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB)**, is the only organization that confers and verifies the CNM and CM credentials.

American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB)

AMCB is a separate corporate entity from ACNM. AMCB is responsible for developing and administering the national certification examination to candidates who meet established criteria and demonstrate sufficient and appropriate knowledge to provide minimum safe care according to established ACNM standards of practice.

Midwives often need verification of certification for credentialing and licensing purposes. There are three ways to obtain a **letter of verification** (whichever way you choose, the cost is **\$50.00**):

- Send a written request for a **letter of verification** to AMCB. Include the full name of the CNM or CM, certification number if available, and where AMCB should send the reply, and enclose a **check** made payable to the AMCB; **or**
- Access the AMCB website at <http://www.amcbmidwife.org/>, put the first and last name of the CNM or CM® in the instant verification window, and when her/his information comes up, click on “Purchase Primary Source Verification,” then follow instructions; **or**
- Simply call AMCB’s toll free number (**1-866-366-9632**) and purchase the letter of verification with a credit card over the phone.

Ensuring Continuing Competency: Continuing Competency Assessment (CCA) and the Certificate Maintenance Program (CMP)

Ensuring continuing competency has long been a concern of ACNM and AMCB. In 1986, ACNM established the Continuing Competency Assessment (CCA) program. Initially a mandatory program, it was made voluntary in 1995. Some states have made participation mandatory for maintenance of state licensure, and it does provide evidence of continuing education. Information about the CCA program can be found at <http://www.midwife.org/education.cfm?id=82>.

Historically, the CNM credential was granted for life. In 1996, AMCB began to offer a time limited certificate which required completion of an 8 year certificate maintenance program cycle. It was becoming clear to AMCB that lifetime certification for health care providers was no longer acceptable to the public or regulatory agencies. In addition, evidence shows that the requirement of CEUs alone is ineffective in maintaining clinical competence. Most other health care professional organizations require Certification Maintenance Programs (CMP) cycles of 5 years or less.

In 2010, the CMP Cycle length will be changed from 8 to 5 years. In addition, there will be changes in the required activities within CMP. The module and CEU requirements will remain the same, completed within 5 years rather than the current 8 year time frame (3 modules and 2.0 CEUs). Beginning in 2010, you will also be required to submit verification of an active license with no restrictions, to demonstrate professional standing.. Your current certification expiration will not change if your current expiration date is between December 31, 2010 and December 31, 2015. However, if your current certificate expires on December 31, 2016, your new expiration date will be on December 31, 2015.

Effective January 1, 2011, all CNMs/CMs will have time limited certificates and be enrolled in CMP.

For CCA enrollees, your initial certification cycle in the CMP will expire at the same time as your current CCA cycle. For midwives who are not currently enrolled in the CCA, you will be enrolled into the CMP based on your original year of certification.

How to Enroll in the CMP

During 2009 and 2010, midwives certified prior to January 1, 1996 should notify AMCB with current contact information to ensure the receipt of their new certificate. AMCB is gathering this information to ensure a complete and accurate database of practicing CNMs and CMs.

What is the cost of participating in the CMP

As of 2010, the yearly cost will be \$65/year. This fee includes the module bibliography, objectives, and open-book assessment tool. You have the option of purchasing the article sets. For those midwives certified prior to 1996, billing for CMP participation will begin with the January 2011 invoice. CCA participants will receive a partial credit based on when they enrolled in their current CCA cycle.

For more information regarding the certification and recertification process or the Certificate Maintenance Program, please visit the AMCB website at: www.amcbmidwife.org. or contact them at (866 366 9632).

Inquiries regarding certification status and testing schedules should be directed to: AMCB, 849 International Drive, Suite 205, Linthicum, MD 21090. Ph: (866) 366-9632; fax: (410) 694-9425

Bibliography

Fullerton JT. 1994 task analysis of American certified nurse-midwifery. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1994; 39:348-357. *This article describes the study conducted to investigate the knowledge, skills, and abilities that define American nurse-midwifery practice.*

Fullerton JT, Parker KW, Severino R. Development and outcomes of the multiple-choice format national certification examination in nurse-midwifery and midwifery. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1997; 42:349-354. *This article provides a brief overview of the certification examination.*

Fullerton JT, Roberts JE, Valhoff WL. Recent developments in professional midwifery education and credentialing. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1996; 41:322-327. *Please note that this article describes the Assured Equivalency Option (AEO), which is no longer being offered. It also addresses the decision to award a time-limited credential, as well as the development of guidelines for the accreditation of non-nurse-midwifery education programs.*

The following articles document the process whereby ACNM developed a mechanism to educate non-nurse-midwives:

Burst HV. An update on the credentialing of midwives by ACNM. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1995; 40(3):290-296.

Fullerton JT, Roberts JE, Valhoff WL. Recent developments in professional midwifery education and credentialing. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1996; 41(4):322-327.

Shah MA, Hsia L. Direct-entry midwifery education. History in the making. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1996; 41(5):351-354.

The following articles describe the experience of the State University of New York Health Science Center at Brooklyn, in partnership with North Central Bronx Hospital, in implementing the first direct entry midwifery education program to be pre-accredited by ACNM:

Fullerton JT, Shah MA, Holmea G, Roe V, Campau N. Direct entry midwifery education. Evaluation of program innovations. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1998; 43(2):102-105.

Fullerton JT, Shah MA, Schechter S, Muller JH. Integrating qualified nurses and non-nurses in midwifery education: the two year experience of an ACNM DOA Accredited Program. *J Midwifery Women's Health* 2000; 45(1):45-54.

Revised 07/07/09

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