

Expanded Practice

Two questions frequently asked of the Department of Professional Services at the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) are:

“Is it within the scope of practice for a midwife to _____?”

“How do I expand my practice to _____?”

Fill in the blank with “first assist at Cesarean Section,” “use a vacuum extractor,” “perform circumcision,” or another expanded midwifery practice procedure. This *QuickInfo* lists ACNM documents that provide an essential foundation for answering these questions and provides additional resources that will be useful to midwives and others concerned with these questions.

The Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice

This document delineates the fundamental knowledge, skills, and behaviors expected of a new practitioner. The focus, as highlighted in the title, is *basic* midwifery practice. *Expanded midwifery practices* consists of those procedures or components of practice, such as first assisting, use of vacuum extractor, and performing circumcision that may be acquired beyond basic midwifery education. The Core Competencies are available on the ACNM web site at <http://www.midwife.org/display.cfm?id=484&print=2>.

The following articles are also of interest:

Summers, L. Answering the Call: How to Address Expanded Practice Questions. *Quickening* July/August 2005. *This article clarifies expanded practice terminology.*

ACNM Education Committee. Core competencies in nurse-midwifery: expected outcomes of nurse-midwifery education. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1979; 24:32-36.

This article describes the development of the Core Competencies, beginning with a recommendation by nurse-midwifery educators in 1973, and was the initial publication of the Core Competencies as approved by the ACNM Board of Directors in February 1978.

Roberts J, Sedler KD. The Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice: critical ACNM document revised. *J Nurse Midwifery* 1997; 42:371-372.

This editorial describes the third major revision of the Core Competencies.

Standards for the Practice of Midwifery (2003)

Realizing that practice would evolve and that individual and institutional differences would influence decisions regarding expanding practice beyond the Core Competencies, the ACNM developed *Guidelines for the Incorporation of New Procedures into Nurse-Midwifery Practice* in the early 1970s. This document has been incorporated as Standard VIII in the 2003 revision of the ACNM *Standards for the Practice of Midwifery*. If you are a midwife, following this standard is essential when you choose to expand your practice beyond the core competencies. Keep the necessary documentation (literature review, documentation of study method and supervised practice, outcome statistics, etc.) in your permanent professional files. Send only the completed reporting form to the national office. The form is available at <http://www.midwife.org/siteFiles/descriptive/standardsreportingform06.pdf>.

Legal Guidelines

The *Standards* direct the midwife to consider relevant statutes and regulations that might constrain the midwife from incorporation of a particular procedure. State laws and regulations that may define the scope of practice of a midwife, when they exist, are addressed in two ACNM publications available from the ACNM Resource Catalog*: *Nurse-Midwifery Today: A Handbook of State Laws and Regulations* (2002), and *Direct Entry Midwifery: A Summary of State Laws and Regulations* (2002). Some state laws explicitly reference the ACNM Standards thereby permitting advanced practice procedures consistent with the guidelines.

Journal of Nurse-Midwifery (JNM) Home Study Program (HSP)

An HSP on advanced nurse-midwifery practice was published in the JNM, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Suppl), March/April 1993. Ten articles in this special issue address areas of expanded midwifery practice and collaborative management, including circumcision, endometrial biopsy, colposcopy, ultrasound and vacuum extraction. While continuing education credit is no longer available for this HSP, it does include important background information and some of the content is still relevant to current practice. JNM is a peer-reviewed journal published bi-monthly by the ACNM. As of January 2000, JNM's name has been changed to the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health* (JMWH). All ACNM members receive a subscription to the journal as a member benefit. Single issues, both current and back, exist in limited quantities and are offered for sale subject to availability. Reprints/back issues may be obtained by contacting Elsevier Science: 1-888-4ES-INFO (437-4636), 212-633-3680 (fax) or usinfo-f@elsevier.com.

Payment Issues

Midwives who perform advanced procedures that are consistent with their state-defined scope of practice should be paid for those services (if they are covered) under all federal health programs and most private health plans. Many state insurance laws mandate payment for services provided by a midwife if they would be covered by a health plan when provided by a physician. For more information on federal and state laws governing payment issues, midwives and third party payers should consult the ACNM publications, *Getting Paid: Billing, Coding and Payment for Midwifery Services* (2003) and the Handbook on State Laws and Regulations referenced above.

Other ACNM Resources

While the ACNM has not produced a Clinical Bulletin or Handbook regarding each commonly performed advanced practice procedure, the following materials are available:

- Clinical Bulletin No. 1 -- June 1996, **Limited Obstetrical Ultrasound in the Third Trimester**
- ACNM Handbook, The Midwife as First Assist (2001) Stock ID #928
- ACNM Position Statement: The CNM/CM as First Assistant at Surgery; may be accessed at: <http://www.midwife.org/prof/display.cfm?id=123>
- Clinical Bulletin No. 5 -- June 2001, **Endometrial Biopsy**
- ACNM Handbook, Vacuum Assisted Birth in Midwifery Practice (2002) Stock ID # 465
- Three cases illustrating risk management issues are addressed by Jan Kriebs in "Expanding the scope of clinical practice -- promises and pitfalls," *Quickening*, Jan/Feb 1997, p. 18, 20.

* The ACNM Resource Catalog is available from the ACNM Web site. You may also contact us at the phone number or e-mail address below and request that a Catalog be mailed to you.

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The "*QuickInfo*" series was developed by the Dept. of Professional Services to respond to common inquiries, summarizing ACNM resources regarding a particular topic, as well as listing selected literature and other resources. Feedback is welcomed; contact Professional Services at 240-485-1800 or info@acnm.org. 5/6/2003