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June 16, 2009

The Honorable Kent Conrad
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Conrad and Collins:

I am writing on behalf of the American Nurses Association (ANA) to express support for the Midwifery Care Access and Reimbursement Equity Act of 2009 (S. 662). ANA strongly supports your efforts to address the Medicare reimbursement disparity for midwifery services. The Midwifery Care Access and Reimbursement Equity Act will benefit disabled and senior women in need of reproductive health services and maternity care.

Certified nurse midwives (CNMs) provide essential primary care services to women of all ages. Multiple studies have documented the quality of services and positive outcomes associated with CNM care. Medicare has covered CNM services since 1988, but reimbursement has been limited to 65 percent of the amount afforded to other obstetrical and gynecological service providers. The Medicare Payment Advisory Committee noted in their June 2002 report that this payment disparity has "no specific analytic foundation."

CNMs have historically provided health services in physician shortage areas. However, the 35 percent Medicare reimbursement disparity has made it difficult for CNMs to meet the primary care needs of Medicare beneficiaries. The Midwifery Care Access and Reimbursement Equity Act will help to provide these women with a real choice in health care provider. ANA looks forward to working with you to support the enactment of S. 662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rose J. Gonzalez".

Rose Gonzalez, MPS, RN
Director,
Government Affairs