



POSITION STATEMENT

PRECONCEPTION HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE: THE ROLE OF THE CNM/CM

Improving a woman's preconception health leads to an improvement in reproductive health outcomes. The aim of preconception care is to improve the health of women of reproductive age before conception, thereby improving pregnancy related outcomes. Preconception care is defined as a set of interventions that aim to identify and modify biomedical, behavioral, and social risks to a woman's health or pregnancy outcome through prevention and management.

National recommendations to improve preconception health and health care were introduced in April of 2006 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The American College of Nurse-Midwives was a participant in the development of these recommendations.

This initiative is based on the concern that progress to improve pregnancy outcomes have slowed in recent years. Low birth weight, premature birth, and infant mortality continue to occur at rates that are unacceptably high. Evidence suggests that risk reduction efforts must be implemented, before pregnancy, in order to reduce these rates by detecting, treating, and/or modifying behaviors, health conditions, or risk factors that can lead to these adverse outcomes. Many women have no access to, or do not seek, this care, and many pregnancies are not planned.

It is the position of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) that:

- The health of women is a primary goal independent of their reproductive life plan.
- Improvement in women's overall health status and access to health care services has the potential to improve reproductive health.
- The CDC and March of Dimes national initiatives can lead to improvement in preconception care and reproductive outcomes and the ACNM encourages certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives to incorporate these specific recommendations into practice.

References:

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly: Recommendations to Improve Preconception Health and Health Care—United States. Volume 55 (RR-6), April 21, 2006.

March of Dimes: Preconception Health & Health Care: www.marchofdimes.com

Source: Division of Standards and Practice

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