

Avoiding a Midwife Midlife Crisis



by **Katherine Camacho Carr, CNM, PhD, FACNM**
President

By the time you read this, we will be celebrating winter holidays and preparing our resolutions for a new year. I wish you the merriest of holidays, time with family and friends, and happy birthdays throughout 2005.

The ACNM Board and leadership met in early December to reexamine and reevaluate our strategic priorities, approve the 2005 budget, as well as commit to our legislative and policy agenda. ACNM turns 50 this year and the Board and staff plan to avoid a serious "midlife crisis." Midlife can be dangerous territory for an organization, as well as an individual, as it is marked by a transition from what we have been, to what we are meant to be. This transition is not easy and can be greatly resisted. When entering this challenging and crisis oriented place in organizational and professional development, it is helpful to have a map to provide direction, lie out the terrain, and understand the destination with clear goals in mind.

ACNM's mission is to promote the health and well-being of women and newborns within their families and communities through the development and support of the profession of midwifery, as practiced by certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives (ACNM Board of Directors, 12/03). Our destination is

clear on the organizational "map." The way to get there from here is complex, multidimensional and multileveled, yet defined by the strategic priorities. We already know that the terrain (health care system, political, policy and regulatory environment to name just a few aspects) is filled with boulders, potholes, hills, mirages, and a few land mines, making frequent adjustments necessary and requiring many and varied resources to make the trip. So how will we maneuver through this "dangerous territory" in 2005, taking advantage of the opportunities that also present?

I would like to outline some of the things that are on the horizon in 2005 for ACNM and elaborate on how we plan to make progress. Here are some highlights of what we will be working on as we "scope out the terrain" and prepare to move forward. The Board of Directors has approved a budget that will increase our research capabilities in the national office. This expanded capacity to collect and report data will help define our workforce needs, conduct policy analysis, and examine changes in the practice environment in greater detail than ever before. We have also dedicated resources to explore options for restructuring the organization. Our focus will be on a governance system that is efficient and effective, as well as representative of our members. Many of you have participated in discussions on this topic in the past and you can expect several more opportunities to share your wisdom as we progress down this path.

We are renegotiating our contract with the certifying body for CNMs/CMs, the ACNM Certification Council (ACC). As you know, ACC is a separate organization from ACNM and we will focus negotiations on issues of concern that have been raised by our members such as customer service, quality and flexibility in operations (especially as this pertains to the Certification Maintenance Program), as well as making provisions

for continued dialogue between the organizations. We have already begun collegial conversations with ACC President Dr. Nancy Lowe, CNM.

We are taking a serious look at the status of midwifery education, with the cooperation of the Directors of Midwifery Education (DOME), and are committed to decreasing barriers to education. We are working with the Division of Education and DOME to examine the advantages and disadvantages of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree being proposed as an entry to practice for advanced practice nurses. The Barriers to Education study will be completed and a report sent to the HRSA Division of Nursing.

We will continue to work for reasonable reimbursement for midwives from Medicare and Medicaid. We will also continue monitoring other legislative issues of importance to women, infants and families. We will continue working with our colleagues to strengthen midwifery and women's health care here and throughout the world. ACNM representatives will attend the ICM in July 2005 in Australia.

Of course we also have a big celebration planned in June 2005 when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of ACNM. I hope you will all attend the Gala in Washington, D.C. as well as the education sessions and our midwife march to Capitol Hill. Our annual meeting is the perfect opportunity to fill in the details on our future map and propel us down the road toward the accomplishment of our mission. In the meantime, let's all make a commitment to get our hiking boots in shape, redistribute the work load to ease the burden on any one individual, consult our "compass" regularly, and keep on "hiking" as we traverse this next section of our organizational path. **Q**

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Members are welcome to attend any open session of a Board of Directors meeting.

2005 Meetings:

March 11, 12, 13 Location TBD

June 16, 17, 18 Washington, DC

September 8, 9, 10, 11

Location TBD

December 1, 2, 3, 4 Location TBD