



POSITION STATEMENT

The Role of the Certified Nurse-Midwife/Certified Midwife in Preconception Health and Health Care

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

- The health of a woman is a primary goal independent of her reproductive life plan.
- Improvement in a woman's overall health status and access to healthcare services has the potential to improve her reproductive health.
- The national initiatives of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)¹ and the March of Dimes² can lead to improvement in preconception care and reproductive outcomes, and the ACNM encourages certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) to incorporate these specific recommendations into practice.

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

National recommendations to improve preconception health and health care were introduced in April 2006 by the CDC,¹ and ACNM participated in the development of these recommendations. This initiative is based on the concern that progress to improve pregnancy outcomes had 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 outcomes³. Many women have no access to or do not seek this care, and many pregnancies are not planned.

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Recommendations to improve preconception health and health care—United States. *MMWR*. 2006;55(RR-6):1-23.
2. March of Dimes. Preconception health care. http://www.marchofdimes.com/pregnancy/getready_indepth.html. Published July 2008. Accessed July 23, 2012.
3. [Hani K. Atrash](#), H.K., Johnson, K., [Adams](#), M., [Cordero](#), J., Howse, J. Preconception Care for Improving Perinatal Outcomes: The Time to Act. *Matern Child Health J*. 2006 September; 10(Suppl 1): 3–11.

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