

American College of Nurse-Midwives

Leadership Guidelines of Ethical Conduct

Introduction

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (the “ACNM”) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of the health and well-being of women and families through the profession of midwifery as practiced by CNMs and CMs. The ACNM Board of Directors (the “Board”) is the policy-making group which sets short- and long-term goals and determines the direction of the organization. The Board is responsible for appointing representatives to speak on behalf of the organization and to carry out the work of the ACNM. The ACNM Board is accountable at all times to the membership for its decisions, actions, and delegated responsibilities. Through its delegation of authority to the Executive Director, the Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the national office staff and its function.

The governing body of any organization has specific fiduciary responsibilities and is required to adhere to specific ethical guidelines in relation to the management of the organization. All ACNM officers and staff have a moral obligation to abide by the established ACNM Code of Ethics. The following are intended to be used by the ACNM leaders as guidelines and expectations for their conduct.

Ethical mandates

Accountability in an organization is defined as the quality of being responsible; accountability for the Board denotes a moral obligation and duty to reflect the trust placed in it by the ACNM membership.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall act in accordance with the principles set forth in the current ACNM Code of Ethics in all aspects of professional relationships.

- Leaders respect basic human rights and dignity of all persons, treating them fairly and with integrity and empathy. This mandate includes valuing expertise, experience, creativity and innovation.
- Leaders act without discrimination based on factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or disability.
- Leaders respect their own self worth, dignity and professional integrity.
- Leaders promote and support the development of each other and of future leaders of the ACNM.
- Leaders promote, develop, and maintain standards of leadership practice, research and policies that foster high ideals of honesty, integrity, and fiduciary responsibility.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall promote, advocate for, and strive to protect the profession of midwifery through furthering ACNM’s mission, philosophy and stated goals.

When interacting with government, regulatory and professional organizations, and other entities, leaders shall maintain a professional demeanor and support positions consistent with ACNM’s mission, philosophy, stated goals, and directives.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall not use their position or influence within the organization for personal gain.

- Leaders respect and protect privileged information to which they have access in the course of their duties. They do not use confidential information for personal advantage, financial enrichment, third-party gain, or to the detriment of the ACNM.
- Leaders avoid any activity or interest that is in conflict with that of the ACNM. Leaders make full disclosure of all actual and potential conflicts of interest.
- Leaders do not solicit or accept gifts, gratuities, free trips, or honoraria when acting as an ACNM representative, except as permitted by Board policy.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall promote transparency in governance.

- Leaders openly and candidly report on ACNM’s activities and operations.
- Leaders handle information with respect and with confidentiality to the extent required by law and established organizational policy
- Leaders transfer information to the membership in a timely manner.
- Leaders maintain and actively facilitate communication with members in a manner that provides adequate detail and allows time for deliberation. Leaders utilize a mutually satisfactory mechanism for receiving and incorporating feedback.
- Leaders provide members who express an interest in the affairs of the organization with a meaningful opportunity to communicate with an appropriate representative of ACNM.
- Leaders develop partnerships with other leaders, constituents, and contacts in which relevant information is shared as appropriate for the situation, leading to informed decision-making, an evolving plan of action, and acceptance of responsibility for the outcomes of decisions made both individually and collectively.
- Leaders use information provided by ACNM or acquired as a consequence of the leader’s service to ACNM solely in a manner that furthers leadership duties.
- Leaders prevent misuses of ACNM property or resources and keep ACNM’s property secure.

Corporate Responsibilities

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall adhere to the bylaws of the organization and all applicable state and federal laws.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall act in the best interests of the ACNM

- Leaders continue to learn and update their body of knowledge, skills, and behavior necessary for competent performance as a leader in the ACNM, including the following areas: effective leadership; written and oral communication; documentation and reporting; finance; politics; interpersonal relationships, negotiation, advocacy, consensus building and decision making; and personnel management.
- Leaders protect the ACNM and its members, including other leaders, from harmful, unethical or incompetent practices by taking appropriate action that may include reporting as mandated by law.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall exercise sound financial management, promote independent fiscal oversight, comply with all state and federal laws and regulations governing nonprofit corporate finances; abide by and periodically review and revise written financial policies; and promote equitable distribution of resources.

- Leaders promote fiscally responsible, fair and equitable allocation of the ACNM resources.
- Leaders make decisions after a full, open exploration of options, with deliberations considering both short- and long-term ACNM goals, ACNM priorities, and financial consequences.
- Leaders adhere to, review and revise as needed fiscal policies which require independent oversight and transparency in governance in accordance with all state and federal regulation and law.
- Leaders evaluate policy decisions and changes using the most effective tools available.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall develop and promote fair, equitable and nondiscriminatory human resources policies in all aspects of their leadership practice.

- Leaders relate to the ACNM National Office staff in a manner that utilizes appropriate patterns of communication, promotes respect for staff, and strengthens the organization as a whole.
- Leaders participate in decision-making processes that facilitate resolution of disagreements, allowing freedom for expressing dissent without recrimination or denigration and promote consensus support for ACNM National Office and Board decisions.
- Leaders develop standard policies to facilitate and provide protection for confidential reporting of suspected impropriety or misuse of ACNM funds or resources.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall periodically review and when necessary revise the management policies and governing documents of the ACNM.

ACNM elected and appointed leaders shall develop and maintain a written policy for information technology and document handling and retention.

- Upon termination of service, a leader promptly returns to the ACNM National Office all documents, electronic and hard files, reference materials, and any other property entrusted to the leader for the purpose of fulfilling the job responsibilities.
- Leaders appropriately archive all records of a historical nature.
- A retiring leader maintains a continuing obligation of confidentiality with respect to information acquired and/or retained as a consequence of tenure as an ACNM leader.
- Except as required by law, leaders do not share, copy, reproduce, transmit, divulge or otherwise disclose any confidential information related to ACNM affairs. They provide complete documentation wherever necessary.

Delegated Responsibilities

The ACNM Board has the sole authority to delegate midwifery leadership to individuals.

Individuals with delegated authority shall:

- Adhere to the ethical mandates of this Leadership Guidelines of Ethical Conduct.
- Act in the best interest of the ACNM.
- Act in accord with the scope of authority delegated.

Proposed by the ACNM Ethics Committee, May 10, 2009

Approved by ACNM Board of Directors, 9/09