

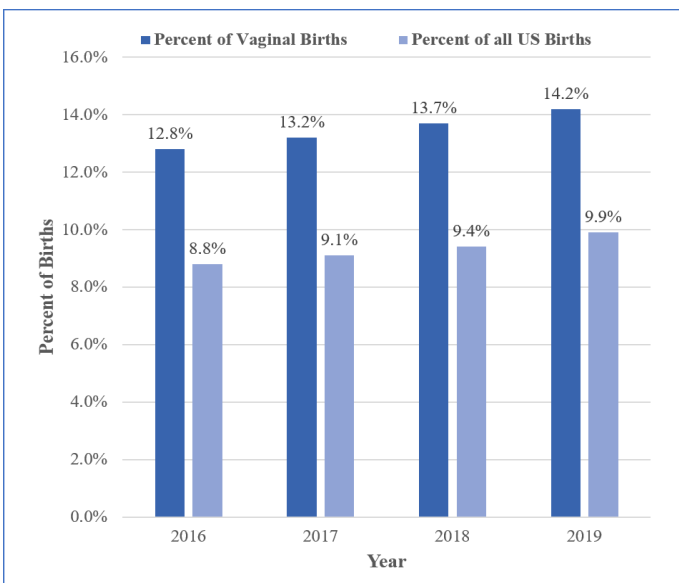
FACT SHEET

Essential Facts about Midwives

Midwives and Birth in the United States

- The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association representing certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) in the United States. According to the American Midwifery Certification Board, as of December 2020, there were 12,805 CNMs and 119 CMs. The majority of midwives in the United States are CNMs.¹
- In 2019, CNMs/CMs attended 369,362 births—a slight increase compared to 2018. In 2019, CNMs/CMs attended 92% of all midwife-attended births and 9.9% of total US births.² (2019 is the most recent year for which birth data are available from the National Center for Health Statistics.)

Percentage of Births Attended by Certified Nurse-Midwives and Certified Midwives, 2016–2019



United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Division of Vital Statistics, Natality public-use data 2007-2019, on CDC WONDER Online Database, October 2020. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/natality-current.html> on Jun 10, 2021

Midwifery Practice

- CNMs are licensed, independent health care providers with prescriptive authority in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and USVI. CNMs are defined as primary care providers under federal law. CMs are licensed, independent health care providers who have completed the same midwifery education as CNMs.
- CMs are authorized to practice in Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Virginia. CMs have prescriptive authority in New York, Maine, Maryland, Rhode Island and Virginia. The first accredited CM education program began in 1996.
- While midwives are well-known for attending births, 76% of CNMs/CMs identify reproductive care and 49% identify primary care as responsibilities in their full-time positions.³ Examples include annual exams, writing prescriptions, basic nutrition counseling, parenting education, patient education, and reproductive health visits.⁴
- In 2019, 89% of CNM/CMs attended births in hospitals, 9% in freestanding birth centers, and 8% occurred in homes.³
- More than 43% of CNMs/CMs list physician/midwife practices or hospitals/medical centers as their principal employers.³
- Medicaid reimbursement for CNM care is mandatory in all states. Most Medicaid programs reimburse CNMs/CMs at 100% of physician rates. Medicare reimburses CNMs at 100%. Most states also mandate private insurance reimbursement for CNM/CM services.

Midwifery Education

- Standards for education and certification in midwifery are identical for CNMs and CMs.
- The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) is the official accrediting body for CNM/CM education programs. There are 39 ACME-accredited midwifery education programs in the United States.⁵
- Approximately 84% of CNMs have a master’s degree.³ As of 2010, a graduate degree is required for entry to midwifery practice as a CNM/CM.⁶
- 20% of CNM/CMs have doctoral degrees.³

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6. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Mandatory Degree Requirements for Entry into Midwifery Practice. American College of Nurse-Midwives website. Published June 2015, Accessed June 16, 2021. <https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/ACNMLibraryData/UPLOADFILENAME/000000000076/Mandatory-Degree-Requirements-June-2015.pdf>