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.

- 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. (2019 is the most recent year for which birth data are available from the National Center for Health Statistics.)

> 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. Examples include annual exams, writing prescriptions, basic nutrition counseling, parenting education, patient education, and reproductive health visits.

In 2019, 89% of CNM/CMs attended births in hospitals, 9% in freestanding birth centers, and 8% occurred in homes.

- More than 43% of CNMs/CMs list physician/midwife practices or hospitals/medical centers as their principal employers.

- 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.

- Approximately 84% of CNMs have a master’s degree. As of 2010, a graduate degree is required for entry to midwifery practice as a CNM/CM.

- 20% of CNM/CMs have doctoral degrees.

REFERENCES


Updated June 2021