Ballot Questionnaire: Theresa Kouadi, Region 7 Representative

Ballot Question 1: What makes you interested in this position? Why are you running for this office?

As I read the invitation on the ACNM Elections page to creat the change that I wanted to see, I realized not onle is my vote my voice, but I have an obligation to offer my service. To not just a small group or faction that might look like me or align with my views of desire for inclusion of midwives of the African Diaspora, LGBTQ midwives, midwives who care for underrepresented and underserved women and familes. And those of us who have not always felt they see themselves in the positions of responsibility in our College.

Ballot Question 2:  Visit ACNM's Strategic Plan HERE. What part of the strategic plan embodies your personal philosophy?

There are many areas of the strategic plan that embody my personal philosophy of midwifery practice and professional development, the most important is seeing true, objective, measurable effort to see meaningful diversification AND inclusion of Black and Indigenous midwives in the membership and leadership of ACNM, strengthening and supporting affiliates especially smaller or geographically challenged affiliates and finally expanding access to expert, excellent evidence-based midwifery care to persons capable of childbearing across the lifespan, their babies and the families that care for them with structural and cultural humility.

Ballot Question 3: What ideas do you have for enhancing diversity and inclusion?

First and foremost, there can be no meaningful increase in the diversity of The College without true INCLUSION, which mean allowing not just the proverbial seat at the table, but an equal portion and the utensils to dig in and do the work. As a Black queer woman, I have not always felt welcome, wanted and valued by the College. But I believe the way to make that difference is to take the bold step to not pull back to but lean into my own fears of rejection and instead embrace being a part of being an organization we hope folks from diverse backgrounds would want to be a part of. I believe ACNM needs to be more transparent in the reporting of the current ethnic diversity of The College today and trends over time and of the profession as a whole as represented by the demographics of the certificate holders of AMCB. Also an assessment of the diversity of the midwifery faculty of the 39 accredited CNM/CM program and a critical look at the diversity of the students and question what impact does implicit bias play in the selection of and support for students from underrepresented backgrounds. I also believe that we need to make meaningful efforts to include professional education on the care of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and LGBTQ folks into the continuing education of AMCB. The glaring lack of any significant content on diverse populations in the required continuing education of our profession might suggest to CNM/CM from those populations that aren't members of CNM that they, we aren't important. As my mama would say, do tell me, show me.

Ballot Question 4: What innovation or improvement would you bring to ACNM?

I bring authenticity. And I bring the perspective of midwives from four unique but important groups: I am a queer midwife of color, who now serves an underrepresented, indigenous community different from my own culture as a mid-to-late career profession. At a time when many are stepping away from the profession, I have embraced a new challenge career in a complex setting and have embraced something that is often difficult at any age. Change. I have learned to respect and love my clients who are my neighbors, so uniquely different from any others that I have known before and made this place home. Willingness, bravery, and openness to change is a vital quality we need to have to make big and sometimes painful changes.