

POSITION STATEMENT

Independent Midwifery Practice

The American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) maintains that safe, quality health care can best be provided when policy makers develop laws and regulations that permit certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) to provide independent midwifery care within their scopes of practice and to foster consultation, collaborative management, or seamless referral and transfer of care when indicated. It is the position of ACNM that:

- Midwifery practice is the independent provision of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, as well as for sexual and reproductive health, gynecologic health, and family planning services, including preconception care. Midwives also provide primary care for individuals from adolescence throughout the life span as well as care for the healthy newborn during the first 28 days of life.¹
- The practice of midwifery occurs in health care systems that facilitate consultation, collaborative management, or referral as indicated by the client's health status.
- In independent midwifery practice, CNMs and CMs use knowledge, skills, judgment, and authority to provide health care in accordance with ACNM's *Standards for the Practice of Midwifery*.²

Background

Independent practice is not defined by the place of employment, the employee-employer relationship, requirements for physician signature or collaborative agreement, or the method of reimbursement for services. In addition, *independent* should not be interpreted to mean *alone*, because there are clinical situations in which any prudent practitioner would seek the assistance of another qualified practitioner.

Collaboration is the process whereby health care professionals jointly manage care.³ The goal of collaboration is to share authority while providing quality care within each individual's professional scope of practice. Successful collaboration is a way of thinking and relating that requires knowledge, open communication, mutual respect, commitment to the provision of quality care, trust, and the ability to share responsibility. ACNM, along with other professional organizations, such as the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology,

affirm that health care provision is optimized when licensed, independent providers collaborate to provide quality, team-based care.^{4,5}

REFERENCES

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5. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Task Force on Collaborative Practice. *Collaboration in Practice: Implementing Team-Based Care*. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; 2016. Accessed March 31, 2022.
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Note: Midwifery and midwife as used in this document refer to the education and practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) who have been certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB).

Source: Clinical Practice Committee

Approved by the ACNM Board of Directors: 1995

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