AMERICAN COLLEGE of NURSE-MIDWIVES

POSITION STATEMENT

Planned Home Birth

The number of people in the United States choosing to give birth at home has increased significantly in the past decade.[1,2] For the essentially well person experiencing a healthy pregnancy, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn course, childbirth with qualified providers can be accomplished safely in all birth settings, including home, birth center, and hospital.[3-8] The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) affirms that:

- Every individual has the right to give birth in an environment that upholds human dignity, self-determination, and respect for cultural context.
- Individuals have the right to participate in shared decision-making regarding their preferred place of birth.
- Planned home birth should be an accessible option for those who choose to give birth in that setting.
- Individuals who plan home births often experience a course of care that supports normal, physiologic birth and reduces the need for obstetric and neonatal interventions.[3-8]
- Certified midwives (CMs) and certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) are qualified to provide comprehensive antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn care in the home setting.[9,10]
- Home birth is best achieved within an integrated, supportive system of safe, seamless care that ensures respectful collaboration among all health care providers and institutions in the event that transfer from home to hospital becomes necessary. [11-15]
- States and jurisdictions are responsible for fostering a climate of respect for birthing individual's autonomy and authority through laws and regulations that support childbirth in home, birth center, and hospital settings.
- Reimbursement from third-party payers should be available to licensed maternity care providers for the full scope of home birth services.
- Professional liability insurance carriers should provide coverage at actuarially appropriate premiums for licensed maternity care providers attending home births.[16]

Background

Although more than 98% of women in the United States give birth in hospitals, some families prefer to give birth at home.[1,2] The safety of birth in all settings is a primary concern and remians the focus of home birth research.[3-8] Planned home birth refers to care provided by qualified clinicians for healthy individuals experiencing pregnancy and birth within a system that ensures access to a higher level of maternity care when needed. Large observational studies have demonstrated excellent perinatal outcomes for planned home births.[3-8] Planned home birth has also been associated with reduced use of medical interventions that are associated with perinatal morbidity for birthing individuals and infants.[3,4,11] The safety of home birth is optimized by assessing each individual and family's appropriateness for planned home birth, ensuring attendance by a qualified provider, and maintaining integrated systems that support collaborative care.[11,13,15]

Within the context of midwifery care, individuals are encouraged and supported to make informed decisions regarding their preferred birth setting.[17-19] The process of informed choice in selecting a birth site includes consideration of:

- Evidence-based information on the potential risks and benefits of each available birth setting;
- Assessment of maternal and fetal health;
- Access to qualified birth attendants; and
- A clear mechanism for transport, if necessary, during the course of care.

The home birth setting offers a unique opportunity to study and learn from physiologic birth. Insights into best practices for pregnancy and childbirth across all settings may be derived from further research on home birth.

For further guidance regarding evidence-based perinatal care in the home setting, ACNM maintains several resources including the *Midwifery Provision of Home Birth Services ACNM Clinical Bulletin*[20] and the *Home Birth Practice Manual,* 5th Edition.[21]

REFERENCES

1. MacDorman MF, Barnard-Mayers R, Declercq E. United States community births increased by 20% from 2019 to 2020. *Birth.* 2022;49(3):559-568. doi:10.1111/birt.12627
2. Gregory EC, Osterman MJ, Valenzuela CP. National vital statistics reports. *Natl Vital Stat Rep.* 2025;(8):1. doi:10.15620/cdc/174593
3. Scarf VL, Rossiter C, Vedam S. Maternal and perinatal outcomes by planned place of birth among women with low-risk pregnancies in high-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Midwifery.* 2018;62:240-255. doi:10.1016/j.midw.2018.03.024

4. Reitsma A, Simioni J, Brunton G, Kaufman K, Hutton EK. Maternal outcomes and birth interventions among women who begin labour intending to give birth at home compared to women of low obstetrical risk who intend to give birth in hospital: a systematic review and meta-analyses. *EClinicalMedicine.* 2020;21:100319. doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2020.100319
5. Hutton EK, Reitsma A, Simioni J, Brunton G, Kaufman K. Perinatal or neonatal mortality among women who intend at the onset of labour to give birth at home compared to women of low obstetrical risk who intend to give birth in hospital: a systematic review and meta-analyses. *EClinicalMedicine.* 2019;14:59-70. doi:10.1016/j.eclinm.2019.07.005
6. Olsen O, Clausen JA. Planned hospital birth compared with planned home birth for pregnant women at low risk of complications. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 2023;3(3):CD000352. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD000352.pub3
7. Bovbjerg ML, Cheyney M, Hoehn-Velasco L, et al. Planned home births in the United States have outcomes comparable to planned birth center births for low-risk birthing individuals. *Med Care.* 2024;62(12):820-829. doi:10.1097/MLR.0000000000002074
8. Nethery E, Schummers L, Levine A, Caughey AB, Souter V, Gordon W. Birth outcomes for planned home and licensed freestanding birth center births in Washington state. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2021;138(5):693-702. doi:10.1097/AOG.0000000000004578
9. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Definition of midwifery and scope of practice of certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives. Updated December 2021. Accessed July 29, 2024. https://midwife.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Definition-Midwifery-Scope-of-Practice_2021.pdf
10. American College of Nurse-Midwives. Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice. Published March 20, 2020. Accessed November 24, 2025. https://midwife.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025_core_competencies_basic_midwifery_practice.pdf
11. Hutton EK, Cappelletti A, Reitsma AH, et al. Outcomes associated with planned place of birth among women with low-risk pregnancies. *CMAJ.* 2016;188(5):E80-E90. https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.150564
12. Hays K, Denmark M, Levine A, de Regt RH, Andersen HF, Weiss K. Smooth transitions: enhancing interprofessional collaboration when planned community births transfer to hospital care. *J Midwifery Womens Health.* 2022;67(6):701-706. doi:10.1111/jmwh.13441
13. Baayd J, Lloyd M, Garcia G, Smith S, Sylvester H, Clark E, et al. Catalyzing collaboration among interprofessional birth transfer teams through simulation. *J Midwifery Womens Health.* 2023;68(4):458-465. doi:10.1111/jmwh.13497
14. Danhausen K, Diaz HL, McCain MA, McGinigle M. Strengthening interprofessional collaboration to improve transfers between a freestanding birth center and an academic medical center. *J Midwifery Womens Health.* 2022;67(6):753-758. doi:10.1111/jmwh.13437
15. Olvera L, Smith JS, Prater L, Hastings-Tolma M. Interprofessional communication and collaboration during emergent birth center transfers: a quality improvement project. *J Midwifery Womens Health.* 2020;65(4):555-561. doi:10.1111/jmwh.13076

16. Page K, ed. *Midwives' Guide to Professional Liability.* 3rd ed. American College of Nurse-Midwives; 2020. https://ams.midwife.org/product/1071
17. Royal College of Midwives. Informed decision making. Accessed November 24, 2025. https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/6007/informed-decision-making_0604.pdf
18. Kloester J, Wiley S, Hall H, Brand G. Midwives' experiences of facilitating informed decision-making: a narrative literature review. *Midwifery.* 2022;109:103322. doi:10.1016/j.midw.2022.103322
19. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). *Intrapartum Care.* NICE Guideline NG235. Published March 2023. Accessed November 24, 2025. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng235/resources/intrapartum-care-pdf-66143897812933
20. American College of Nurse-Midwives Clinical Bulletin. Midwifery Provision of Home Birth Services. *J Midwifery Womens Health*. 2026;71(2):1–12. doi:10.1111/jmwh.70081.
21. American College of Nurse-Midwives. *Home Birth Practice Manual.* 5th ed. American College of Nurse-Midwives; 2020.

Note: Midwifery as used throughout this document refers to the education and practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) who have been certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board.

Source: Division of Standards and Practice: Clinical Practice and Documents Section and Homebirth Section
Revision: Planned Home Birth Clinical Bulletin Task Force and Research and Standards Committee
Approved by the ACNM Board of Directors: December 2005
Revised: May 2011
Updated: December 2016, December 2025.