AMERICAN COLLEGE of NURSE-MIDWIVES

# Comparison of Certified Nurse-Midwives, Certified Midwives, and Certified Professional Midwives

*Clarifying the distinctions among professional midwifery credentials in the United States*

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| **International Confederation of Midwives' Definition of a MIDWIFE** | While the profession of midwifery has developed differently in each country, we share a common understanding of the midwife internationally. The International Confederation of Midwives' definition is:<br><br>A midwife is a person who has successfully completed a midwifery education programme based on the ICM Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education, recognied in the country where it is located; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practice midwifery and use the title 'midwife,' and who demonstrates competency in the scope and practice of the midwife. |

| National Midwifery Credentials in the United States of America | Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) | Certified Midwife (CM) | Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) |
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| **EDUCATION** | | | |
| Minimum Degree Required for Certification | Graduate Degree | | Certification does not require an academic degree but is based on demonstrated competency in specified areas of knowledge and skills. |
| Minimum Education Requirements for Admission to Midwifery Education Program | Bachelor's Degree or higher from an accredited college or university AND | | High School Diploma or equivalent |
| | Earn RN license prior to or within midwifery education program. | Successful completion of required science & health courses and related health skills training prior to or within midwifery education program. | Prerequisites for accredited programs vary, but typically include specific courses such as statistics, microbiology, anatomy and physiology, and experience such as childbirth education or doula certification.<br><br>There are no specified requirements for entry to the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) pathway: an apprenticeship process that includes |

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| **EDUCATION PROGRAM ACCREDITING ORGANIZATION** | | | |
| | The Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) is authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit midwifery education programs and institutions. Midwifery education programs must be located within or affiliated with a regionally accredited institution. | | The Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) is authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit midwifery education programs and institutions. The scope of recognition includes certificate and degree-granting institutions, programs within accredited institutions, and distance education programs. |
| **SCOPE OF PRACTICE** | | | |
| Range of care provided | Midwifery as practiced by CNMs and CMs encompasses the independent provision of care during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period; sexual and reproductive health; gynecologic health; and family planning services, including preconception care. Midwives also provide primary care for individuals from adolescence throughout the lifespan as well as care for the healthy newborn during the first 28 days of life. Midwives provide care for all individuals who seek midwifery care, inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations.<br><br>CNMs/CMs provide initial and ongoing comprehensive assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. They conduct physical examinations; independently prescribe medications including but not limited to controlled substances, treatment of substance use disorder, and expedited partner therapy; admit, manage, and discharge patients; order and interpret laboratory and diagnostic tests; and order medical devices, durable medical equipment, and home health services.<br><br>Midwifery care as practiced by CNMs and CMs includes health promotion, disease prevention, risk assessment and management, and individualized wellness education and counseling. These services are provided in partnership with individuals and families in diverse settings such as ambulatory care clinics, private offices, telehealth and other methods of remote care delivery, community and public health systems, homes, hospitals, and birth centers. | | Certified Professional Midwives' practice of midwifery embodies the definition of high-quality primary care offering whole-person, integrated, accessible, and equitable health care during the prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum periods. CPMs provide gynecological, sexual, and reproductive care including family planning, well-person, and preconception. This independent, autonomous work may be accomplished as part of an interprofessional team of healthcare providers. CPMs are accountable for addressing the majority of an individual's health and wellness needs across settings. The scope and care emphasizes sustained relationships with patients, families, and community partners. CPMs initiate and complete ongoing comprehensive wellness and risk assessment, health screenings, diagnosis, treatment, and care management. This care includes holistic health promotion, disease prevention, individualized wellness education, and counseling. As independent, autonomous healthcare providers this care is given from adolescence throughout the lifespan as well as care for the healthy newborn during the first six weeks of life. |

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| **SCOPE OF PRACTICE *cont.*** | | | |
| Practice Settings | All settings - hospitals, homes, birth centers, and offices. The majority of CNMs and CMs attend births in hospitals. | | Homes, birth centers, and offices. The majority of CPMs attend births in homes and/or birth centers. CPMs do not attend births in hospitals. |
| Prescriptive Authority | All US jurisdictions | Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington, DC | CPMs do not maintain prescriptive authority; however, they may obtain and administer certain medications in select states. |
| Third Party Reimbursement | Most private insurance; Medicaid coverage mandated in all states; Medicare, TRICARE | Most private insurance; Medicaid coverage in Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington, DC | Private insurance mandated in 6 states; coverage varies in other states.<br>13 states include CPMs in state Medicaid plans |
| **CERTIFICATION** | | | |
| Certifying Organization | American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) | | North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) |
| | AMCB and NARM are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies | | |
| Requirements Prior to Taking National Certification Exam | Graduation from a midwifery education program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME); AND<br>Verification by program director of completion of education program<br>AND<br>Verification of master's degree or higher<br><br>*CNMs must also submit evidence of an active RN license at time of initial certification | | Graduation from a midwifery education program accredited by the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) OR<br>Completion of NARM's Portfolio Evaluation Process (PEP) OR<br>AMCB-Certified CNM/CM with at least ten community-based birth experiences OR<br>Completion of an equivalent state licensure program<br><br>All applicants must also submit evidence of current adult CPR and neonatal resuscitation certification or course completion |
| Recertification Requirement | Every 5 years | | Every 3 years |

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| **LICENSURE** | | | |
| Legal Status | Licensed in 50 states plus the District of Columbia and U.S. territories as midwives, nurse-midwives, advanced practice registered nurses, or nurse practitioners. | Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Virginia, and D.C. | Licensed in 37 states and the District of Columbia. |
| Licensure Agency | Boards of Midwifery, Medicine, Nursing or Departments of Health | Boards of Midwifery, Medicine, Nursing, Complementary Health Care Providers or Departments of Health | Boards of Midwifery, Medicine, Nursing, Complementary Health Care Providers; Departments of Health or Departments of Professional Licensure or Regulation |
| **PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION** | | | |
| | American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) | | National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) |

*Note:This document does not address individuals who are not certified and may attend births with or without legal recognition*

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