



# Home Birth: Resources for Payers and Policymakers

## *About the American College of Nurse-Midwives*



**The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)** is the oldest women's health organization in the United States, with roots dating back to 1929.

In all but six states in the nation, certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) are licensed independent practitioners. They have prescriptive authority in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa and Guam. CNMs provide primary healthcare to women of all ages, including prenatal care, labor and delivery care, post-partum care, gynecological exams, newborn care, family planning services, preconception care, menopausal management and counseling in health promotion and disease prevention.

ACNM developed the certified midwife (CM) credential in 1997 as a pathway for entry into the midwifery profession for individuals who are not nurses. Like CNMs, CMs are educated in the discipline of midwifery; they have the same scope of practice, take the same certification exam and are certified by the same certification board (the American Midwifery Certification Board).

In 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, the National Center for Health Statistics reports that CNMs attended 306,377 births in the US. Nearly 97% of CNM-attended births occurred in hospitals, 2% occurred in freestanding birth centers and 1.3% (4,034) at home. Of the total 24,468 home births occurring in the US in 2005, 10,643 (43.5%) were attended by other midwives.<sup>1</sup>

CNMs and CMs practice autonomously within a health care system that provides for consultation, collaborative management or referral to specialists and acute care as indicated by the health status of the client. CNMs and CMs practice in accord with the Standards for the Practice of Midwifery, as defined by the ACNM. These standards are available on the ACNM website.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Sutton PD, Ventura SJ, Menacker F, Kirmeyer S, Munson ML. Births: Final data for 2005. National vital statistics reports; vol 56 no 6. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2007. Available at [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56\\_06.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_06.pdf). Accessed August 1, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> American College of Nurse-Midwives, Standards for the Practice of Midwifery. Available at [http://www.midwife.org/siteFiles/education/Standards\\_Practice\\_Midwifery\\_2003.pdf](http://www.midwife.org/siteFiles/education/Standards_Practice_Midwifery_2003.pdf). Accessed 08/01, 2008.