



POSITION STATEMENT

INDEPENDENT MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

It is the position of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) that midwifery practice is the independent management of women's health care, focusing particularly on common primary care issues, family planning and gynecologic needs of women, pregnancy, childbirth, the postpartum period and care of the newborn. The practice occurs within a health care system that provides for consultation, collaborative management or referral as indicated by the health status of the client.

Independent midwifery enables certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) to utilize knowledge, skills, judgment, and authority in the provision of primary women's health services while maintaining accountability for the management of patient care in accordance with ACNM Standards for the Practice of Midwifery.

Independent practice is not defined by the place of employment, the employee-employer relationship, requirements for physician co-signature, or the method of reimbursement for services. Nor should *independent* be interpreted to mean *alone*, as there are clinical situations when any prudent practitioner would seek the assistance of another qualified practitioner.

Collaboration is the process whereby health care professionals jointly manage care. 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, a commitment to providing quality care, trust and the ability to share responsibility.

* 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 College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) or the American Midwifery Certification Board, Inc. (AMCB), formerly the American College of Nurse Midwives Certification Council, Inc. (ACC).

Source: Clinical Practice Committee
Approved by ACNM Board of Directors: February, 1995
Revised last: September, 2004