

Our Philosophy of Care

We, the midwives of the American College of Nurse-Midwives, affirm the power and strength of women and the importance of their health in the well-being of families, communities and nations. We believe in the basic human rights of all persons, recognizing that women often incur an undue burden of risk when these rights are violated.

We believe every person has a right to:

- Equitable, ethical, accessible quality health care that promotes healing and health
- Health care that respects human dignity, individuality and diversity among groups
- Complete and accurate information to make informed health care decisions
- Self-determination and active participation in health care decisions
- Involvement of a woman's designated family members, to the extent desired, in all health care experiences

We believe the best model of health care for a woman and her family:

- Promotes a continuous and compassionate partnership
- Acknowledges a person's life experiences and knowledge
- Includes individualized methods of care and healing guided by the best evidence available
- Involves therapeutic use of human presence and skillful communication

We honor the normalcy of women's lifecycle events. We believe in:

- Watchful waiting and non-intervention in normal processes
- Appropriate use of interventions and technology for current or potential health problems
- Consultation, collaboration and referral with other members of the health care team as needed to provide optimal health care

We affirm that midwifery care incorporates these qualities and that women's health care needs are well-served through midwifery care.

Finally, we value formal education, lifelong individual learning, and the development and application of research to guide ethical and competent midwifery practice. These beliefs and values provide the foundation for commitment to individual and collective leadership at the community, state, national and international level to improve the health of women and their families worldwide.

Our Scope of Practice

Midwifery as practiced by Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives (CMs) encompasses primary care for women across the lifespan from adolescence beyond menopause, with a special emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health. Midwives perform comprehensive physical exams, prescribe medications including contraceptive methods, order laboratory and other diagnostic tests, and provide health and wellness education and counseling. The scope of practice for CNMs and CMs also includes treatment of male partners for sexually transmitted infections, and care of the normal newborn during the first 28 days of life.

Our Credentials

The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) is the professional association that represents certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs).

Certified nurse-midwives are registered nurses who have graduated from a nurse-midwifery education program accredited by the [Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education \(ACME\)](#) and have passed a national certification examination to receive the professional designation of certified nurse-midwife. Nurse-midwives have been practicing in the United States since the 1920s.

Certified midwives are individuals who have or receive a background in a health related field other than nursing and graduate from a midwifery education program accredited by ACME. Graduates of an ACME-accredited midwifery education program take the same national certification examination as CNMs but receive the professional designation of certified midwife.

The [American Midwifery Certification Board \(AMCB\)](#) administers the national certification examination for CNMs and CMs. CNMs are legally authorized to practice in every state in the United States and in the District of Columbia. CMs are currently legally authorized to practice in New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island.