

Time for a Makeover

by Lorrie Kline Kaplan, CAE, ACNM Executive Director



In the last several years, the ACNM Board of Directors (BOD) and other ACNM volunteer leaders have been engaged in a number of facilitated exercises related

to strategic planning. Through this process, we have identified five strategic goals:

1. Develop strategic communications articulating the value of midwifery care in the United States
2. Achieve full autonomy in practice and equitable reimbursement
3. 1000 newly certified CNMs/CMs per year
4. Support the provision of high-quality maternity care and women's health services by CNMs and CMs
5. Ensure the organizational effectiveness and efficiency of ACNM—ie, ensure that ACNM has the resource base and level of organizational functioning needed to meet the first three goals

ACNM's goal is for midwives to attend 20% of all US births by 2020.

Strategic communications has been consistently ranked by ACNM leaders, members, and students as our profession's most critical need. So many forces and trend lines seem to be moving in our favor and the evidence supporting midwifery care practices grows every day. We are making progress on state and federal legislative fronts and at health policy tables. And yet, the public does not know who we are, or what we do. The midwifery "brand" is not strong.

We have not effectively communicated our values and our image to external audiences (mostly consumers). We need to more confidently and positively define midwifery. We need to project an image that the public will understand.

We are excited to take on this challenge as our top priority for 2012. ACNM has contracted with Jones Public Affairs, a woman-owned public relations agency in Washington, DC, specializing in women's health, to lead this initiative. The project is underway and is comprised of two phases:

1. **Organizational alignment:**

Before we can develop a clear and unified message for the public, we need to be very clear who we are within our own ranks. In this first phase, we are developing a vision statement, revisiting our existing mission statement, and developing a series of value statements that represent the core of our organization and our profession. It has been an exciting process to re-examine our organizational identity and re-articulate the core of who we are, emphasizing the values we all share while ensuring flexibility on issues and values on which we are diverse and may disagree.

2. **Development and implementation of a strategic communications plan:**

There are many different audiences that we'd like to reach, but we must prioritize. At this point, the consumer audience is rising to the top, with health systems coming in as second priority. We are re-evaluating our existing communications channels and exploring new ones.

In developing the framework for this project, we have carefully considered how to balance strong leadership by the elected leaders of the profession with strategic counsel from staff and our consultants alongside input and engagement from members. There will be opportunities in the coming months for members to provide input. We heartily welcome your


Other Priorities in 2012

While the branding project is priority #1 for our board and staff this year, other work is ongoing. Watch for more information on the following initiatives throughout the year:

1. Improve Medicaid reimbursement for midwifery services by encouraging state Medicaid programs to adopt Medicare payment policies;
2. Support affiliates in addressing barriers to practice autonomy in state law and regulation;
3. Eliminate discriminatory hospital privileging policies and Joint Commission supervisory language;
4. Promote improved federal policy related to midwives teaching medical residents and student midwives;
5. Continue to enhance resources for midwives teaching students and residents through legislative, regulatory, and other direct strategies;
6. Recommend next steps in the development of a minimum dataset and national data registry for ACNM members; and
7. Enhance membership retention and recruitment efforts.

engagement! See the front page article for information about joining the Rapid Reactor Panel.

These are historic times. We are in the midst of game-changing conversations with other midwifery organizations as well as other health professional colleagues—conversations that only a year ago seemed impossible. In so many ways, the stature of midwifery is higher than ever before. The timing is favorable for us to leverage that success to more aggressively market the midwifery brand. We are committed to stepping forward mindfully to establish midwifery as the standard of care for women.

2012 is destined to be an exciting year at ACNM. I hope you will help us seize this opportunity. 

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