



October 4, 2017

Ms. Karen V. Scipio-Skinner, MSN, RN
Executive Director
D.C. Board of Nursing
899 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Ms. Scipio-Skinner,

On behalf of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the Board in strong support of efforts that seek to license Certified Midwives (CMs) in the District. ACNM and its members stand for improving and increasing access to quality care and coverage for women throughout the lifespan. We support common-sense policy solutions that ensure women have guaranteed health coverage and access to a full range of essential health services and health care providers under Medicare and Medicaid, and individual and family health insurance plans.

The expansion of the midwifery model-of-care is a key strategy to improving access to care and health outcomes for women and childbearing families in the District. Access to timely prenatal care and labor and delivery services continue to be a barrier for many women in rural and urban areas nationwide. The shortage of maternity care providers has been a well-documented issue. The Wall Street Journal, Washington Post and several other national publications have recently featured stories on the tragic situation. This issue is not foreign to the District, as recent announcements from two hospitals indicate the closure of maternity wards predominately servicing a medically-underserved population of D.C. and close-in Maryland suburbs. Increasing the number of midwives, specifically Certified Midwives, capable of caring for women and attending births in the District could provide relief to hospitals and birth centers as they prepare to deal with the increased patient population that will ultimately result from these closures.

ACNM is the professional association that represents both Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives (CMs) in the United States. With roots dating to 1929, ACNM sets the standard for excellence in midwifery education and practice in the U.S. and strengthens the capacity of midwives in developing countries. Our members are highly trained health care professionals who provide care for women throughout the lifespan, with an emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health care.

Washington, D.C. already recognizes the value of midwifery care, as CNMs are licensed health care providers that work autonomously within their full scope of practice in the District. Like CNMs, a Certified Midwife is an individual educated in the discipline of midwifery. Certified Midwives (CMs) earn graduate degrees, meet health and science education requirements, and complete a midwifery education program accredited by Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME). CMs pass the same national certification examination given by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) as CNMs, who are already licensed to practice in the district, and receive the professional designation of CNM. Both CMs and CNMs demonstrate the *Knowledge, Skills and Behaviors Prerequisite to Midwifery Clinical Education* prior to commencing midwifery clinical training. Both CNMs and CMs demonstrate the identical *Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice* of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) upon completion of their midwifery education programs. Both CNMs and CMs must practice in accordance with ACNM *Standards for the Practice of Midwifery*. ACNM competencies and standards are consistent with or exceed the global competencies and standards for the practice of midwifery as defined by the International Confederation of Midwives. To maintain the designation of CNM or CM, midwives must be recertified every 5 years through AMCB and must meet specific continuing education requirements. Licensed to practice in Delaware, Maine, New York, New Jersey and Rhode Island, individuals choosing this career path are pioneers in the profession, much like the early nurse-midwives who practiced in the U.S 50 – 70 years ago.

ACNM strongly believes that pathways must exist for individuals to enter the midwifery profession with a sound foundation in the biological and social sciences as well as skills for counseling, health assessment, diagnosis, emergency response and stabilization and the other knowledge, skills, and behaviors to support achievement of competence in midwifery. While ACNM values nursing as one valuable pathway to gain these skills, we recognize that nursing is not the exclusive educational route to these essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors. Evidence from high resource countries that spend less and demonstrate higher value and quality outcomes support recognition of multiple routes to midwifery education. The needs of women, the growing elderly population, the faculty shortfall, clinical site shortages, and the projected maternity care workforce shortfall require innovation of additional pathways to accredited midwifery education, certification, and licensure. .. These

pathways must afford both CNMs and CMs the opportunity to practice to the full extent of their education and training in order to achieve optimal health for women through the lifespan. Recognition of the CM credential in the District will cultivate increased access to midwifery care and help combat the ever-growing maternity care provider shortage issue.

ACNM appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of licensing Certified Midwives in Washington, D.C. By raising the status of Certified Midwives through statute and regulation, the standard of care and the health of mothers and babies in the District will be improved through expanded access to safe and cost-effective care. We stand ready to work with both the Board and the City Council to prioritize the health care of women and newborns through development of laws and regulations that support access to affordable coverage and the excellent care that Certified Midwives can provide. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns at akohl@acnm.org or 240-485-1806.

Sincerely,



Amy M. Kohl
Director, Advocacy and Government Affairs
American College of Nurse-Midwives