



# NEWS RELEASE

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**Contact: Yolanda Landon**  
**240-485-1822**  
**Email: [ylandon@acnm.org](mailto:ylandon@acnm.org)**

## **ACNM SETS AGGRESSIVE FEDERAL POLICY AGENDA**

**Silver Spring, MD** – The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) Board of Directors has approved its federal legislative and regulatory policy agenda in preparation for the 111th Congress and the incoming administration of President-elect Barack Obama. The agenda was developed with the assistance of the ACNM Government Affairs Committee.

“ACNM is energized by the high priority that the new president-elect and Congress members have placed on delivering solutions to our nation’s health care challenges,” said ACNM President Melissa Avery, PhD, CNM, FACNM. “ACNM members have much to offer in improving women’s access to high-quality health care services. We look forward to working with President-elect Obama and his administration to enact meaningful reforms that will benefit all women and newborns.”

### **ACNM’s Federal Legislative Agenda**

ACNM will continue to work with members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to:

- **Support Health Care Reform**, by focusing on improving quality and reducing disparities in access to women’s health care services, including primary, gynecologic, family planning and maternity care. ACNM will highlight strategies to enhance quality, access, value and clinical outcomes through improved access to midwifery care.
- **Provide for Equitable Reimbursement for Midwifery Services**, by working to pass legislation for equitable reimbursement of midwifery services at 100% of the Medicare Part B fee schedule, as well as legislation to allow academic health centers to bill for supervision by nurse-midwives of medical students and residents.
- **Promote Access to Midwifery Services in All Federal Health-Related Programs**, by working to assure adequate federal funding for midwifery services in the Medicare, Medicaid, Indian Health Service, Veterans Health Administration and other federal health-related programs.
- **Support Professional Liability Reforms**, by advocating for legislation to address professional liability coverage premiums, which pose significant challenges to the provision of quality maternity care.
- **Increase the Supply of Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives (CMs) in the U.S.**, by securing additional funding for nursing and midwifery education within the Public Health Service Act (Title VIII), the National Health Service Corps and other areas.
- **Preserve Antitrust Remedies**, by ensuring that no individual group of health care professionals is exempt from laws governing fair practices, and encouraging strong enforcement of existing laws.

### **ACNM’s Federal Regulatory Agenda**

On the regulatory front, ACNM will be working with U.S. government agencies that implement and enforce laws relating to the delivery of health care services. Specifically, ACNM plans to engage the Obama administration on the following priorities:

- **Medicare Supervision Regulations for Midwifery Services:** Advocate for the adoption of the Medicaid supervision standard for all federal health programs, including Medicare.
- **E-Prescribing Incentive Program:** Work with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as it implements this new program to ensure midwives are eligible for additional resources.
- **Development of Quality Indicators:** Continue to work with CMS and others to develop and refine quality indicators that can be linked to improvements in care.
- **Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Recognition:** Encourage recognition of CNMs and CMs as distinct from nurse practitioners.
- **Medicare Billing Assignment:** Clarify that midwives can assign their billing numbers under Medicare and Medicaid to an appropriate employer. While CNMs and CMs can assign their billing rights to an employer today, ACNM will be seeking further clarification on this matter.

### **An Energetic Transition to a New, High-Energy Administration**

In preparation for the action to come, ACNM has sent a letter of congratulations and support to President-elect Obama as well as to the transition office of former Senator Tom Daschle, appointee for Secretary of Health and Human Services. ACNM has been meeting with key members of the House and Senate, their staffs and members of the incoming administration. ACNM is participating actively in coalitions to develop shared principles of health reform, and advocating for the inclusion of nursing and midwifery workforce funding in any economic stimulus package.

ACNM formed a Presidential Taskforce on Health Care Reform in 2007 to develop recommendations; the complete report will be available in January.

### **What ACNM Members Can Do Now**

The Obama transition team is reaching out to gather input from national organizations and citizens. ACNM strongly encourages its members to get involved. Here are several ways to make your voice heard:

1. Share your ideas on health care reform at [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov). Focus on stories demonstrating how midwifery care improves outcomes and yields cost savings, or where barriers to practice are limiting access or leading to poor outcomes. Encourage your clients to write in as well.
2. Participate in and/or host community meetings between now and the end of the year. Go to [www.change.gov](http://www.change.gov), and click on the Health Care Discussions link (at bottom right).
3. Get involved in state and local health reform panels. Keep us posted on your activities!
4. Send welcome/introduction letters to members of Congress.
5. Stay tuned in to all ACNM communications channels for more information.

The ACNM Government Affairs Committee will take a leading role in coordinating ACNM's grassroots efforts.

“We need every ACNM member to get involved in health care reform, whether they have ten spare minutes or several hours,” urges Avery. “ACNM will provide members with specific suggestions for action. We have a critical opportunity to gain improvements in women’s health care. Let’s all work together to make this happen!”

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**For more information, please contact Yolanda Landon, ACNM Communications Manager at (240) 485-1822 or via e-mail at [ylandon@acnm.org](mailto:ylandon@acnm.org).**

With roots dating to 1929, the American College of Nurse-Midwives is the oldest women's health care association in the U.S. ACNM's mission is to promote the health and well-being of women and infants within their families and communities through the development and support of the profession of midwifery as practiced by certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives. Midwives believe every individual has the right to safe, satisfying health care with respect for human dignity and cultural variations. More information about ACNM can be found at [www.midwife.org](http://www.midwife.org).