

political updates

NACPM State Chapters: Building Capacity to Support CPMs

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Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) are gaining ground across the US, and the number of CPMs continues to grow steadily. Several important advances have been made in state licensure this past year. Nationally, CPMs are leading the way in efforts to increase understanding and strengthen the midwifery profession in the US Midwifery Education, Regulation, and Association workgroup, a collaboration of the professional associations, certifying bodies, and accrediting agencies for CPMs, CNMs, and CMs. There is growing recognition of the important contributions CPMs make to preserving normal physiologic birth, with the related improvements in health outcomes and cost-savings. A critical shortage of obstetricians is looming and there are compelling reasons to expand the midwifery workforce. Opportunities for state and federal recognition of CPMs are opening up, and support is developing for the integration of CPMs in new systems for maternity care.

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persistent barriers encountered by CPMs. The National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) has launched a dynamic new pathway for state midwifery groups to organize for state action, collaborate across the states, and engage with the national professional association. Aiming to create a powerful and unifying voice for all CPMs, the national association is working with midwives in an array of states to establish NACPM State Chapters.

Vision and Purpose

The promise of NACPM is the creation of a unified voice for the profession, the model of care, and the benefits that accrue to women, babies, and families from CPM care. Achieving our bold, shared goals of improving the maternity system and patient outcomes will require significant development at both the state and national levels. We must work at the state level where the authority over CPM licensing, scope of practice, and regulatory accountability resides. And we must work at the federal level where the laws and policies are made that guide health care delivery, access, and provider reimbursement. The US system for regulating health professionals and paying for health services is incredibly complex and dynamic. We must work together at both state and national levels to achieve our vision for CPMs as primary maternity care providers.

By establishing state chapters, CPMs can more effectively join forces to share what they are learning about state-level issues and request guidance and support from the national association. Likewise, chapters will be another



avenue for CPMs to inform and learn from their national leaders. To build community among the state chapters, NACPM will host regular “Chapter Collaboration Calls” in which chapter members can share with each other what they have accomplished and where they need help. NACPM will report on national developments and discuss the implications for CPMs and states. Several CPMs have already suggested topics for these forums, including “how to find common ground in difficult situations,” “how to respect the wishes of traditional cultures in state licensing efforts,” “how to hire a lobbyist,” and “how to secure Medicaid and private insurance reimbursement.”

NACPM will also support state chapters by providing materials that may be useful in making the case for CPMs and state licensure, third-party reimbursement, and/or employment. Likewise, state chapters can expect NACPM to continue the effort to achieve national recognition for CPMs and to draw on the chapters when appropriate to support that work.

Background and Next Steps

In 2013 and 2014, Alaska, Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, and Wisconsin piloted the chapter concept as NACPM assessed the need, evaluated examples provided by other national organiza-

tions, sought legal advice, and tested its own capacity to support chapters. By May 2015, NACPM had all the pieces in place to work with interested CPMs to formally establish state chapters.

More than 20 state leaders have already come forward expressing a desire to work with NACPM to start chapters. They represent a wide variety of state-specific situations – states with just a few midwives practicing illegally, states with more than 100 licensed midwives, states with well-established state associations, and states with no viable organization. In order to address the needs of such diverse states while preserving the purpose and integrity of the national association, state chapters will have to meet certain basic requirements, including non-profit incorporation, by-laws and governance policies, and annual reports. State chapters may elect to qualify for federal tax-exemption under an IRS group ruling that will cover NACPM chapters. Seed money is available to assist states in launching chapters, thanks to the generous support of Southern Cross Insurance Solutions, an NACPM sponsor. All of the information necessary to organize a chapter, including a step-by-step toolkit with links and supporting resources, as well as individualized assistance, is available by contacting Adriana Elliot at the NACPM office: admin@nacpm.org or 603-358-3322. ●