CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIVES AND HOME BIRTH IN NORTH CAROLINA

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Objectives

- List CNM Facts for North Carolina
- Describe home birth trend in North Carolina
- Review the ACNM position on home birth
- Access to care: Problems and solutions
North Carolina CNM Facts

- There are approximately 250 actively practicing CNMs.
- CNMs attend more than 10% of all births in NC.¹
- CNMs are regulated by the Midwifery Practice Act of 1983.²
  - Regulated by the Midwifery Joint Committee
  - Allows CNMs to attend births in hospitals, free-standing birth centers, and homes
  - Requires physician supervision
    - North Carolina is only one of five states left in the country with this requirement

Home Birth Trend in North Carolina

- Home birth is rising in North Carolina.³
  - North Carolina is one of 26 states that has seen a statistically significant rise in home births in the last decade.
  - Most recent data show home births in NC almost doubled between 2004 and 2008.
ACNM Position on Home Birth

CHOICE

- With qualified providers, home birth is an appropriate choice for many women.
- Every family has a right to experience childbirth in an environment where human dignity, self-determination, and the family’s cultural context are respected.
  - This includes the right to informed choice regarding place of birth and access to safe home birth services.  

ACNM Position on Home Birth

RESPONSIBILITY

The client, her family, and the midwife all participate in decision making and responsibility sharing. Although shared decision making is the goal, the midwife is a health care professional who is accountable for applying selection criteria to promote safe outcomes for the mother and her baby.
ACNM Position on Home Birth

SAFETY

- Certified Nurse-Midwives are maternity care professionals who are qualified to provide:
  - Ongoing assessment of appropriate birth site selection over the course of the antepartum, intrapartum and postpartum periods.
  - Antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum and newborn care in the home.

ACNM Position on Home Birth

SAFETY

- The ACNM and NCACNM support laws and regulations that include:
  - Successful completion of a formal education program accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education.
  - Successful completion of a national certification examination in midwifery.
  - Successful completion of regular recertification/continuing education.
  - A scope of autonomous practice, recognized by law or regulation, that is consistent with the content of the education process and certification exam.
  - Governance of health care that supports seamless access to and collaboration with qualified health care professionals and institutions within the health care system.
ACNM Position on Home Birth
COLLABORATION

☐ An integrated system of health care that includes collaboration among all health care providers is essential and fundamental to supporting a safe, seamless, transfer of care from home and/or out of the hospital setting when necessary. 4

NCACNM Position on Home Birth

☐ The NC Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives has further defined its stance on home birth in the “Position Statement on Planned Home Birth in North Carolina.”
Access to Care
All Maternity Care Providers

- Improved access to care is needed to improve outcomes for NC mothers and children, no matter the place of birth.
  - 47 counties in NC have no CNM; 31 counties have no Ob/Gyn. An additional 11 counties have only 1 or 2 Ob/Gyns.\(^7\)
  - ACOG projects an obstetric work force shortage and suggests CNMs as part of the solution.\(^8\)

Access to Care
Home Birth CNMs

- Prior to June 2012, there were 11 certified nurse-midwives providing legal home birth services across the state.
- Eight of these CNMs abruptly lost their supervising physicians in May-June 2012.
- This effectively led to the loss of legal home birth options to over 100 women in NC.
- Many pregnant women were refused transfer of care to other practices.
- CNMs searched to find new MD supervisors: over 100 MDs asked were unwilling or unable to help, many citing increased liability coverage costs.
Solution: Modern Midwifery Care

- Practice according to the standards of our national professional organizations
  - ACNM and ACOG AGREE
    - CNMs and Ob/Gyns are licensed independent providers who may collaborate with each other based on the needs of their patients.

- Update the Midwifery Practice Act of 1983
  - The MD supervision requirement is placing an undue burden on MDs and CNMs and decreases access to safe care, especially care at home.
  - Systematic disincentive for CNMs to provide home birth

References