



Certified Professional Midwives: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who are Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs)?

A: Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) are nationally credentialed and currently have a path to licensure in 23 states. Certified Professional Midwives are:

- Independent practitioners who have met the standards for certification set by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM)
- Trained to provide health-promoting and preventive care that is evidence-based, incorporates best practices and avoids overuse of drugs and interventions
- The only maternity care providers specifically trained to attend births outside the hospital
- A rapidly growing segment of the midwifery profession in the U.S. today

Q: Is the Certified Professional Midwife Credential nationally recognized?

A: Yes. The Certified Professional Midwife credential has been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the same agency that accredits the CNM and CM credentials. The NCCA is the accrediting body of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA).

Q: How are Certified Professional Midwives trained?

A: Using a competency-based system to validate multiple routes of midwifery education, training and education may occur in a classroom, private or clinical setting, is documented by qualified instructors, and takes a minimum of 3- 5 years to complete.

- All Certified Professional Midwives have met the same requirements
- The detailed requirements for knowledge, skills, abilities and experience are defined by the NARM Job Analyses, following the standards set by the NCCA
- The final step in the certification process is national testing, including a hands-on Skills Assessment and an 8-hour Written Examination

Q: What kind of care do Certified Professional Midwives provide?

A: Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) provide thorough care throughout the prenatal, delivery and postnatal stages of childbearing to women who are healthy and experiencing a normal pregnancy. The Certified Professional Midwife:

- Monitors the physical, psychological and social well-being of the mother throughout the childbearing cycle
- Provides the mother with individualized education and counseling that emphasizes health promotion and the prevention of pregnancy problems
- Provides hands-on assistance during labor and delivery, and postpartum support
- Identifies and refers the few women who need obstetrical attention

This kind of care results in healthy outcomes for mothers, babies and families, with high rates of full term, full weight babies and breastfeeding.



Q: What are tangible advantages of Certified Professional Midwife services?

A: Midwife-attended births at home and in birth centers have excellent outcomes and cost much less than hospital deliveries, which account for \$86 billion a year of U.S. healthcare costs. Advantages include:

- **Great outcomes at lower cost:** much lower rates of expensive medical interventions, with outcomes at least as good as outcomes for low-risk births in hospitals, according to a study of 5,400 home births attended by Certified Professional Midwives
- **Healthier babies:** fewer babies compromised by prematurity, low birth weight and effects of overused medical interventions, such as induction and cesarean section, that lead to costly stays in Neonatal Intensive Care Units and future health challenges
- **Medicaid savings:** Each mother on Medicaid who chooses an out-of-hospital birth with a Certified Professional Midwife will lower Medicaid costs, since Medicaid would otherwise be paying for a hospital birth at greater cost and with much greater likelihood of cesarean section
- **Savings to state Medicaid programs:** Washington State Medicaid saved almost \$500,000 over a two-year budget cycle with licensed midwives attending just 2% of the births, according to an analysis by the Washington State Department of Health
- **Overcoming disparities:** Certified Professional Midwives have provided care that effectively decreased expected disparities in childbirth outcomes.

Q: What kinds of barriers prevent more women from choosing Certified Professional Midwives for their prenatal care and birth?

A: Of the twenty-three states that now provide a path to licensure for Certified Professional Midwives, only 11 include CPMs in their state Medicaid programs. Thirty-five states have licensing standards for birthing centers, but not all include Certified Professional Midwives, and Medicaid does not cover essential birth center facility fees. This falls short of genuine and consistent patient choice and access. Certified Professional Midwives and women who want access to their services are seeking federal Medicaid reimbursement for those services as one important step to increase access to this kind of maternity care.

Q: What role can Certified Professional Midwives play in health care reform?

A: Certified Professional Midwives address the basic aims of healthcare reform: to increase a patient's choice of a healthcare provider that simultaneously improves quality, addresses disparities in access to care and in outcomes, and controls costs. Mandating Certified Professional Midwives as Medicaid eligible providers:

- Would start reducing health care costs immediately
- Would address disparities in access, extending to the Medicaid population maternity care options that other women enjoy through private insurers, options that offer cost and quality advantages.

Additional Information:

1. "CPM Issue Brief - Certified Professional Midwives in the United States" - <http://www.nacpm.org/cpm-issue-brief.html>
2. "Milbank Report: *Evidence-Based Maternity Care*" - <http://www.childbirthconnection.org/article.asp?ck=10575>
3. "State of American Childbirth" Citizens for Midwifery fact sheet - <http://cfmidwifery.org/pdf/StateMatCare2005CfM.pdf>
4. "Midwifery Licensure and Discipline Program in Washington State: Economic Costs and Benefits" - http://www.washingtonmidwives.org/assets/Midwifery_Cost_Study_10-31-07.pdf