

May 1, 2009

Dear Fellow Certified Nurse-Midwives and Certified Midwives:

This letter is to inform you of significant changes in certification that will affect all CNMs and CMs.

- *Effective January 1, 2011 all CNMs/CMs will have time-limited certificates and be enrolled in the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) Certificate Maintenance Program (CMP). During 2009 and 2010 nurse-midwives certified prior to 1/1/96 should notify AMCB with current contact information to ensure the receipt of their new certificate.*
- *In 2010 the CMP cycle length will be changed from 8 to 5 years.*
- *Effective in 2010 there will be changes in the required activities with in CMP.*

Nurse-midwifery has long been a leader in the establishment of standards for advanced practice nurses. The irony is that while we have much to be proud of, we need to update our practices to be consistent with the evolving expectations of the health care community. The new AMCB standards are both fully compliant with most states requirements, and are consistent with the best current certificate maintenance and re-certification practices of other health care providers.

AMCB and ACNM have recognized the need for significant revisions to the certification process for **ALL CNMs and CMs**. Lifetime certification for health care providers is a thing of the past. States have already indicated that lifetime certification of health care providers is unacceptable to them. Already, one state has officially informed AMCB that lifetime certification does not meet their state licensing requirements, and others have sent letters questioning the validity of lifetime certification.

Midwives find great satisfaction in being 'with woman', and those whom midwives serve have a right to be assured that practicing midwives are safe and competent. One way midwives do that is by meeting and exceeding the most current standards established by state regulatory boards and by other health care professionals. AMCB's Certificate Maintenance Program is intended to help you do just that.

The first major change is that anyone certified prior to 1/1/96 will now be issued time-limited certificates and will be required to participate in the Certificate Maintenance Program (CMP). Other changes include decreasing the cycle length from 8 to 5 years and revisions of the activities which are required.

As you probably know, most midwives are regulated by boards of nursing. What you may not know is that nursing is moving toward a recertification model for advanced practice nursing (in our case, midwifery) that occurs at a minimum of every 5 years. The Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification & Education, developed by the APRN Consensus Work Group and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and endorsed by ACNM Board of Directors in January 2009,

(http://midwife.org/state_legislation.cfm) recommended that certificate maintenance activities be required which match the “APRN specialty”, midwifery in this case, and re-certification occurs at a minimum of every 5 years.

Nursing is not alone in developing more stringent requirements for certificate maintenance and re-certification. The American Board of Medical Specialties and the National Commission of Certification of Physician Assistants are also moving in a similar direction. In short, despite reasons we have had for retaining lifetime certification, the public, the states, and other health care professionals have weighed in on this, and our current standard is not consistent with their recommendations. We must make this change now, and professionally, and as midwives together.

Last June, Mary Barger, CNM, Chair of the CMP Committee, and I attended part of the ACNM Board meeting to raise our concern that our recertification activities and our continued acceptance of lifetime certificates did not meet current health care professional standards. The ACNM Board encouraged AMCB to explore strategies to bring CNM/CM certification into compliance. A CMP task force was established that included both lifetime and time-limited certificants, and representatives from both ACNM and AMCB.

In January of this year, AMCB hosted a Strategic Planning Meeting which was attended by the AMCB Board and staff; and by Lorrie Kaplan, Melissa Avery, and Barbara Camune from ACNM, Mary Brucker from Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME), and Deb Walker from Directors of Midwifery Education (DOME). The participants voted to proceed with the revisions of the Certificate Maintenance Program as described in this letter.

Attached to this letter is a document of Questions and Answers describing how these changes will be implemented. While the decision to require CMP participation and recertification of all CNMs and CMs has been made, AMCB (amcbmidwife.org) is always open to your comments and suggestions regarding the implementation of these revisions by December 31, 2009. Your comments will be collected and reviewed by the AMCB Board and/or the CMP Committee, and responded to as themes develop. While I will not be able to respond to each of you individually, I appreciate the perspective you have to offer.

Best regards as we continue to move our profession forward,

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President, AMCB