

CPMs: Midwifery Landscape and Future Directions

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Preparing for the Future: Recommendations for Midwives and Students

NACPM believes a picture is emerging where CPMs will be needed and recognized as essential to the healthcare work force in the U.S. and to improving the health and lives of childbearing people and their babies in our country. Physician shortages are growing, and poor outcomes for childbearing people and their babies persist. With important findings on improved outcomes and cost savings with their care, midwives are clearly necessary to care for the childbearing population.

The US MERA collaboration was formed to leverage the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) campaign to save lives and improve the health of people globally by strengthening midwifery through adoption of international standards for education, regulation, and professional associations. The US MERA collaboration has generated a set of principles and agreements that serve as the foundation for mutual support in efforts to align all midwives in the U.S. with international standards and achieve autonomous midwifery regulation in all states and territories. These agreements, endorsed by other professional groups and useful to policymakers, are causing breakthroughs in the recognition of CPMs on both the state and national level. A future is now emerging where the national credential is rapidly becoming essential to licensing, regulation, and reimbursement.

To best prepare ourselves for this future, NACPM advises:

1. All midwives take the opportunity to become nationally-certified now.
 - » **Licensed Midwives who are not CPMs** but who took the NARM exam as part of state license requirements can become CPMs relatively easily and inexpensively. narm.org/equivalency-applicants/lrspee-or-licensed-in-approved-states/
2. All CPMs who did not complete an accredited education program should apply for the NARM Bridge Certificate by completing 50 hours of continuing education in specific subject areas in the five years previous to application. NARM already requires recertification for all CPMs every three years with 25 continuing education credit hours and five hours of peer review; credits towards the Bridge Certificate can also be used for CPM recertification. The Bridge Certificate is just a one-time commitment to put together certain specific continuing education hours and may be a requirement for CPMs without an accredited education to qualify for state licensure and reimbursement. narm.org/midwifery-bridge-certificate/
3. **Anyone considering becoming a midwife** should seriously examine their options for training in light of the changing legal and professional environment. There are a wide variety of accredited educational programs (www.meacschools.org). Some offer entry-level certificates or degrees, and others offer advanced degrees. Several offer distance-learning programs that don't require students to relocate for academic instruction. There are many full-time and part-time options. Some programs are self-paced with rolling admissions throughout the year. A few programs have their own clinical sites, but most place students in community-based preceptorships, often in the student's home community or state. Most accredited programs participate in federal financial aid programs. Those considering non-accredited programs or who are interested in designing their own educational pathway should check national certification and state licensing requirements to be sure that your plan serves your future interests.