



Midwifery Education Accreditation Council

Setting the Standards for Midwifery Education

October 2008

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We believe that midwives provide care that is essential to the health of the nation. The future of midwifery depends on the education of midwives who are prepared to provide high quality care that is responsive to the needs of women, and who can participate effectively in the transformation of our system of maternity care.

Midwifery schools and programs accredited by MEAC prepare midwives for national certification as Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs). These midwives are earning recognition in ever-widening circles. Just this month, the Milbank Memorial Fund, a nonpartisan institute devoted to health policy analysis, issued a new report titled *"Evidence-Based Maternity Care: What It Is and What It Can Achieve."* The report cites data from the landmark study of CPMs published in 2005 and concludes:

The low CPM rates of intervention are benchmarks for what the majority of childbearing women and babies who are in good health might achieve.

The report also cites an issue brief co-authored by MEAC this year that provides useful background information on CPMs, describes the organizations that support the credentialing and recognition of CPMs, and discusses midwifery and health policy issues. Please visit our website - www.meacschools.org - for links to the Issue Brief on Certified Professional Midwives, the Milbank report, the CPM study and other useful resources.

We are pleased to report that the number of students enrolled in accredited midwifery programs is growing. MEAC currently accredits eight freestanding institutions and two programs that reside within universities, providing excellent midwifery education for more than 500 matriculating students. Two new schools have applied for accreditation this year and at least three others have indicated their intent to apply.

As the number of midwives is growing, legal recognition is also expanding. Nearly half of all states now regulate direct-entry midwifery, and at least fifteen other states are considering legislation. At the same time, midwives are working to improve access to care by tackling the complex challenges of insurance coverage, equitable reimbursement, and employment opportunities.

With all this good news, of course, there are some challenges that MEAC faces. We are writing to ask for your help. This year the U.S. Secretary of Education deferred a

decision to extend recognition of MEAC, requesting that we provide evidence of a stronger financial and volunteer base. Although we have consistently met our responsibilities as an accrediting agency since our founding in 1991, the department has determined that our small, hardworking band of volunteers is no longer sufficient. So we are **actively recruiting new volunteers**, particularly practicing midwives and consumers, who are interested in serving on accreditation review teams, project committees, or the Board of Directors.

We are also **building a reserve fund** that will sustain the organization through difficult times. With the help of a major donor and board member contributions, we have set aside \$10,700 this year and plan to raise accreditation fees beginning next year to provide more long-term support. But our accredited schools cannot shoulder this burden alone.

MEAC depends upon the vision and financial support of those who recognize the unique and vital contribution that accreditation makes to the excellence of the profession. **Please consider making your contribution to MEAC today - your investment will make a real difference in the future of midwifery education in the United States.**

Thank you,

Ellie Daniels, CPM
President
Board of Directors