



Midwifery Education Accreditation Council

Setting the Standards for Midwifery Education

March 2010

Dear Friends,

You are receiving this letter because someone in your life is passionate about midwifery, the quality of education midwives receive, and ensuring that women in the U.S. have access to first-rate pre-natal care and a safe delivery.

The Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC) Board of Directors and staff are ardently working to guarantee that this experience is available to all women regardless of race, color, creed, and financial status. MEAC is a federally recognized accrediting agency for direct-entry midwifery schools. ***Our mission is to promote excellence in midwifery education through accreditation***, which is a measure of quality and means of accountability that ensures consistency in the training of direct-entry midwives. MEAC also serves the midwifery community by approving workshops, seminars and conferences for continuing education units which provide current, expert midwifery research and practices.

During 2009, MEAC joined forces with the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives, the Midwives Alliance of North America, Citizens for Midwifery, the International Center for Traditional Childbearing, and the North American Registry of Midwives in a ***groundbreaking national campaign to increase women's access to midwives and quality, affordable maternity care***. The Midwives and Mothers in Action (MAMA) campaign aims to secure federal recognition of Certified Professional Midwives and has already succeeded in garnering support among key members of Congress. Volunteers from MEAC were members of the campaign steering committee, contributing their expertise in midwifery education and countless hours to raise awareness and support for CPMs.

MEAC is a non-profit organization relying on income generated through the accreditation process; assessment of fees from accredited schools; grants; and donations from people like you. Your donation of as little as \$25.00 assists in meeting our budget, without raising fees for the accredited schools. MEAC understands that ultimately it is the midwifery students who would shoulder an increase in fees.

The word midwife means literally "with woman". Practitioners of midwifery are with the pregnant woman while she is laboring, allow the mothers-to-be to feel connected with their babies during childbirth, and have as few interventions as possible. One mother, whose third child was born with a midwife, remembers: ***"The best thing about having a midwife was the comfort and care she gave me. She didn't just show up to 'catch' the baby."***

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MEAC's educational standards incorporate nationally recognized core competencies and guiding principles set by the Midwives Alliance of North America, and fulfill the requirements for national certification by the North American Registry of Midwives. Midwifery students who have completed their coursework and apprenticeships through a MEAC-accredited school are eligible to sit for the NARM exam and earn the title of Certified Professional Midwife (CPM).

Certified Professional Midwives can be found in private practices, clinics, physician's offices, and birthing centers. CPMs are qualified to provide primary care to pregnant women, manage pregnancy care, facilitate vaginal deliveries, and provide postpartum care for mothers and newborns.

One MEAC supporter shares her story: *“When I became pregnant with my first child in 1974, I knew more about hospital births than I wanted to know. At sixteen, I started working at the local hospital. I often heard laboring mothers-to-be yell “get me a nurse – NOW!” Underneath the hospital sounds and smells, I could feel the fear of the women alone in their rooms struggling to deliver their babies. I wanted no part of this. My vision was for a calm, peaceful birth surrounded by loving family and friends in a cozy, familiar place. I was graced with a kind, meticulous and highly skilled midwife who partnered with my husband and me to ease our daughter into her life's journey.”*

Recent data indicates that the cost for a birth attended by a midwife is up to 12% lower than the cost of an uncomplicated physician-assisted birth, and that doesn't include the additional cost of a hospital stay! Depending on where the mother-to-be lives, it is possible that her insurance coverage will cover a midwife-assisted birth.

MEAC's success is ultimately measured by the success of CPM-supported births. You, and your financial donation, significantly contribute to MEAC's success. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, considering what the quality of the birthing experience means to you, and making the effort to write your donation check today.

In Gratitude,

Ellie Daniels, CPM
President, MEAC Board of Directors