

# Virginia Passes Two Bills Increasing Access to Midwifery Care

SILVER SPRING, Md., April 5, 2021 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – It's been a busy and productive legislative season for the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM). The organization is anticipating several wins across the country, but right now is thrilled that two bills in the Commonwealth of Virginia were signed by Governor Ralph Northam this month. It was through careful planning, tireless advocacy and coordinated teamwork that the Virginia ACNM Affiliate was able to make Virginia the eighth state in the country to recognize Certified Midwives (CMs) and the 28th state to allow Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs) to practice to the full extent of their education and clinical training and be regulated without physician control.



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Virginia joins Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island in recognizing the CM credential, increasing access to midwifery care, and potentially improving outcomes for women, babies, and all who need high-quality, individualized sexual and reproductive care.

“With maternal health care deserts throughout the Commonwealth, we need to address care in underserved areas with initiatives that remove barriers to

practice unrelated to health and safety. Greater access to maternal healthcare is essential in reducing disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, and stark racial and class inequities in maternal healthcare access,” says Virginia Affiliate President Katie Page, CNM, FACNM.

Page, along with the affiliate legislative committee chair, Nichole Wardlaw, CNM, FACNM, led a fantastic team, including Karen Kelly, CM; Mary Ellen Bouchard, CNM, MS, FACNM; and their lobbyist, Julianne Condrey, at breakneck speed through a very short session of the Virginia General Assembly.

The CM credential was developed in 1994 to expand access to midwifery through multiple educational pathways. The first CM was licensed in 1997. The CM pathway includes a graduate degree in midwifery from a program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) and board certification through the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB). CMs differ from CNMs only in that they are not also licensed as nurses. CMs and CNMs meet the same core competencies, sit for the same board exam, and have identical scopes of practice, including prescriptive privileges.

“We are thrilled to see Virginia supporting expanded access to midwifery care,” says ACNM President Cathy Collins-Fulea, DNP, CNM, FACNM. “Ensuring midwives are represented at every table is key to mainstreaming midwifery in the United States. We look forward to continuing our work to improve care and reduce inequities in maternal healthcare.

The ACNM Department of Government Affairs and Advocacy has been working hard with dedicated, savvy volunteer affiliate leaders to make full practice authority a reality in all US states and territories. ACNM’s vision of midwifery for every community is our guide in all policy making efforts. As Nichole Wardlaw stated about the successful Virginia efforts, “We can’t keep doing things the same way and expect different outcomes.” Bravo to the Virginia ACNM Affiliate for these two incredible wins for midwives and the people they serve.

## **About ACNM**

With over 6,500 members, ACNM is the professional association that represents certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) in the United States. ACNM promotes excellence in midwifery education, clinical practice, and research. With roots dating to 1929, our members are primary care providers for women throughout the lifespan, with a special emphasis on pregnancy, childbirth, and gynecologic and reproductive health. ACNM provides research, administers, and promotes continuing education programs, establishes education and clinical practice standards, and creates liaisons with state and federal agencies and members of Congress to increase the visibility and recognition of midwifery care.

Learn more at <https://www.midwife.org/>.

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