



January 9, 2009

Dear American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) Members,

As we begin the New Year, I wanted to provide more information about ACNM's expanded role in countermanding the misguided and divisive efforts we have seen in recent years to constrain the scope of practice of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified midwives (CMs), and other non-physician providers.

ACNM proudly serves the interests of over 11,000 highly skilled health care professionals committed to advancing the well-being of women and their families nationwide. ACNM is dedicated to ensuring that all CNMs and CMs have the opportunity to fully exercise their scope of practice and that consumers have access to health care providers who best meet their needs.

We are pleased to announce that ACNM recently has joined the steering committee of the Coalition for Patients' Rights (CPR). In doing so, ACNM has joined forces with other respected national professional membership organizations to protect patients' rights and enhance access to care.

The Coalition for Patients' Rights was formed in 2006 to respond to resolutions adopted by the American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates calling for increased medical oversight over other practitioners' scope of practice. Today, the coalition encompasses 35 organizations representing a broad spectrum of licensed, qualified health care practitioners who provide evidence-based, comprehensive, cost-effective services in a variety of disciplines. CPR is committed to ensuring that consumers uniformly have access to quality health care from practitioners who are authorized to provide the full range of services for which they are demonstrably qualified.

In June 2008, The AMA House of Delegates adopted additional resolutions opposing state regulation of midwifery practice by boards of midwifery and supporting physician supervision of doctors of nursing practice. ACNM believes strongly that state laws should be consonant with national standards of practice for credentialed health care providers.

One of the more troubling aspects of the AMA scope of practice initiative is the implication that there is an urgent need to rein in non-physician practitioners due to concerns about patient safety. In fact, there is no evidence that health care practitioners represented by CPR member organizations have adopted unsafe practices. To the contrary, these practitioners are governed by stringent state and national professional practice standards and they represent an essential solution to the essential access, quality, value and workforce challenges facing the US health care system today.

There has never been a more critical time to foster an environment in which all highly skilled health care professionals are legally authorized to practice to the fullest extent of their training, certification and clinical preparation. Consumers should have an unfettered choice among qualified health care providers working within their scope of practice.

We commend the Coalition for Patients' Rights for its steadfast work to ensure that the delivery of quality health care is not impeded. We congratulate the group on the renewed commitment that CPR member organizations have pledged to this effort and we look forward to shared success in 2009.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Joanna M. King".

Joanna M. King, Esq.  
Director, Government Relations