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Ob-Gyns and Midwives Seek to Improve Health Care for Women and Their Newborns *Groups Issue Collaborative Practice Statement*

Washington, DC -- The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) and The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (The College) are pleased to announce the publication of a new “Joint Statement of Practice Relations between Obstetrician-Gynecologists and Certified Nurse-Midwives/Certified Midwives.” The landmark document highlights key principles to facilitate improved communication, working relationships, and seamlessness in the provision of maternity care and other vital women’s health services.

“Health care is most effective when it occurs in a system that facilitates communication across care settings and among providers,” according to the joint statement. “Ob-gyns and CNMs/CMs are experts in their respective fields of practice and are educated, trained, and licensed, independent providers who may collaborate with each other based on the needs of their patients. Quality of care is enhanced by collegial relationships characterized by mutual respect and trust, as well as professional responsibility and accountability.”

The College and ACNM affirmed their shared commitment to the following:

- Support of evidence-based practice
- Promotion of the highest standards for education, national professional certification, and recertification
- Accredited education and professional certification preceding licensure as essential to ensure skilled providers at all levels of care across the United States
- Recognition of the importance of options and preferences of women in their health care
- Ob-gyns and CNMs/CMs must have access to affordable professional liability insurance coverage, hospital privileges, equivalent reimbursement, and support services in order to establish and sustain viable practices

- Ob-gyns and CNMs/CMs must have access to a system of care that fosters collaboration among licensed, independent providers to ensure highest quality and seamless care

The joint statement is part of an ongoing ACNM and College initiative to promote collaborative practice between obstetrician-gynecologists and certified nurse-midwives and/or certified midwives. Through The College's 2011 Issue of the Year, "Successful Models of Collaborative Practice in Maternity Care," The College and ACNM jointly called for papers describing sustainable models of collaborative practice involving both groups, noting that, "The impending maternity care workforce crisis necessitates focusing on best practices across the United States." More than 60 papers were submitted for consideration; winning papers will be announced at The College's upcoming Annual Clinical Meeting, April 30–May 4, in Washington, DC, and winners will also be honored at the ACNM 56th Annual Meeting, May 24–28, in San Antonio, TX.

"CNMs and CMs and ob-gyns are with women in some of the most important moments in their lives," said ACNM president Holly Powell Kennedy, PhD, CNM, FACNM, FAAN. "By strengthening the way our independent professions work together, we believe that we can more effectively provide the highest quality care that women expect and deserve. We anticipate that this historic document will usher in a new era of enhanced cooperation between our professions."

"Ob-gyns working collaboratively with midwives is a way to address the gap between the supply of ob-gyns and the demand for women's health care services," said Richard N. Waldman, MD, FACOG, president of The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. "As a result, access to health care will be greatly improved."

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With roots dating to 1929, ACNM's mission is to promote the health and well-being of women and newborns within their families and communities through the development and support of the profession of midwifery as practiced by certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives. Midwives believe every individual has the right to safe, satisfying health care with respect for human dignity and cultural variations.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (www.acog.org) is the nation's leading group of physicians providing health care for women. As a private, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization of approximately 55,000 members, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists strongly advocates for quality health care for women, maintains the highest standards of clinical practice and continuing education of its members, promotes patient education, and increases awareness among its members and the public of the changing issues facing women's health care. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/acognews.