

History and Future of the US MERA Joint Project

Partner Organizations

Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME)

American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)

American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB)

Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC)

Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA)

National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM)

North American Registry of Midwives (NARM)

August 2013



Executive Summary

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In the triennium between 2008-2011, the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) took the bold step of developing a group of essential documents that described the “Three Pillars” of midwifery, namely education, regulation and association, which were built upon the foundation of the *ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery* and the *ICM Definition of a Midwife*. The Three Pillars are meant to be interdependent and interrelated and embody ICM’s vision to strengthen midwifery worldwide in order to provide high-quality, evidence-based care for women, newborns, and childbearing families, and decrease maternal and infant mortality and morbidity. The documents together comprise the global standards for midwifery education, practice and regulation and are a complete package of information for midwives, policy makers, regulators and governments.

In response to this significant international initiative, the seven U.S. organizations that are responsible for education, regulation and midwifery associations for the three U.S. midwifery credentials—Certified Professional Midwife (CPM), Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) and Certified Midwife (CM)—convened a work group to articulate a collaborative response to the ICM global vision. In order to strengthen the midwifery profession in the United States and expand the delivery of high quality evidence-based midwifery care, these American midwifery organizations agreed to examine and strengthen the three pillars of midwifery as defined in the core ICM documents.

In November 2011, these seven organizations inaugurated strategic conversations that continued through March 2012 when, with the assistance of funding from the Transforming Birth Fund, they agreed to hire a professional firm, Managance Consulting & Coaching. Managance facilitated the process of preparing for and convening a face-to-face summit at the Airlie Conference Center on April 19-21, 2013. At that time the collaborative group agreed upon the name of *United States Midwifery Education, Regulation and Association (US MERA)*. The seven organizations came to consensus about the goals for the meeting, and five representatives from each of the seven organizations were chosen to attend the summit, along with two facilitators from Managance. The meeting was high-energy, intense and effective, and participants agreed that the goals for the summit were met, and even exceeded. Afterwards, the boards of directors of the seven organizations agreed to continue participation in US MERA as an official entity, moving forward with the work of next steps to strengthen and unify the midwifery profession in the United States. This report describes in detail the history and future of the US MERA Joint Project.