

## Abortion Care Education in U.S. Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education Certified Nurse Midwifery Programs: A Call For Expansion

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**Abstract :** The U.S. faces a severe shortage of abortion providers, exacerbated by the June 2022 Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision. Midwives, especially certified nurse midwives, are well-positioned to fill this gap in abortion care. However, a lack of clinical education and training prevents midwives from exercising their full scope of practice. National and international organizations that set obstetrics and midwifery education standards, including the International Confederation of Midwives, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and American Public Health Association, call for expansion of midwifery-managed abortion care through the first trimester. In the U.S., midwifery programs are accredited based on compliance with ACME standards and compliance is a prerequisite for the American Midwifery Certification Board exams. We conducted a literature review of studies in the last five years regarding abortion didactic and clinical education barriers via CINAHL, EBSCO and PubMed database reviews. We gave preference for primary sources within the last five years; however, due to the rapid changes in abortion education and access, we also included literature from 2012-2022. We evaluated ACME-accredited programs in relation to their geography within abortion-protected or restricted states and assessed state-specific barriers to abortion care education and provision as clinical students. There are 43 AMCB-accredited midwifery schools in 28 states across the U.S. Twenty schools (47%) are in the 15 states in which advanced practice clinicians can provide non-surgical abortion care, such as medication abortion and MVA procedures. Twenty-four schools (56%) are in the 16 states in which abortion care provision is restricted to Licensed Physicians and cannot offer in-state clinical training opportunities for midwifery students. Six schools are in the five states in which abortion is completely banned and are geographically concentrated in the southernmost region of the U.S., including Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas. Subsequently, these programs cannot offer in-state clinical training opportunities for midwifery students. Notably, there are seven ACME programs in six states that do not restrict abortion access by gestational age, including Colorado, Connecticut, Washington, D.C., New Jersey, New Mexico, and Oregon. These programs may be uniquely positioned for midwifery involvement in abortion care beyond the first trimester. While the following states don't house ACME programs, abortion care can be provided by advanced practice clinicians in Rhode Island, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Montana, New Hampshire, and Vermont, offering clinical placement and/or new ACME program development opportunities. We identify existing barriers to clinical education and training opportunities for midwifery-managed abortion care, which are both geographic and institutional in nature. We recommend expansion and standardization of clinical education and training opportunities for midwifery-managed abortion care in ACME-accredited programs to improve access to abortion care. Midwifery programs and teaching hospitals need to expand education, training, and residency opportunities for midwifery students to strengthen access to midwife-managed abortion care. ACNM and ACME should re-evaluate accreditation criteria and the implications of ACME programs in states where students are not able to learn abortion care in clinical contexts due to state-specific abortion restrictions.

**Keywords :** midwifery education, abortion, abortion education, abortion access

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