



POSITION STATEMENT

Midwives' Performance of Ultrasound in Clinical Practice

It is the position of the American College of Nurse-Midwives that:

It is within the scope of midwifery practice for midwives to incorporate ultrasound examinations into their clinical practice.

Performance of ultrasound can be incorporated into midwifery practice by following the Standards of Practice for Midwifery which delineates the requirements for expanding midwifery skills beyond those outlined in the ACNM Core Competencies for basic midwifery education (ACNM Standards of Practice, 2009 and ACNM Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Education, 2009).

Midwives of ACNM who wish to incorporate ultrasound examinations into their scope of clinical practice should have appropriate education and training, acquire the necessary skills and demonstrate the specific competencies to master the studies they perform.

Education and training for ultrasound can be incorporated into CNM/CM education programs as an added skill beyond those required in the ACNM Core Competencies, or the necessary education for performance of ultrasound can be obtained on a continuing education basis following a structured curriculum.

Midwives who incorporate the performance of ultrasound into their practice following the appropriate education and training should be eligible for reimbursement for these services.

State regulations and licensing related to midwifery scope of practice should provide for CNMs/CMs to perform ultrasound commiserate with their education and training.

Background

In 1996, ACNM (ACNM, 1996) published the first clinical bulletin providing guidelines for midwives who wanted to incorporate third trimester ultrasound examinations into their clinical practice. This document was retired in 2009 yet clinical practice has changed in that many midwives are now adding all trimesters of ultrasound examination and gynecologic ultrasound to their clinical practice (ACNM Survey, 2010). Expanded guidelines for the performance of all types of obstetric ultrasounds have been published and updates maintained by three professional organizations: The American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nursing (AWHONN). AIUM is a multidisciplinary association that provides education, research, and the development of professional guidelines for performance of ultrasound across professional disciplines. All three organizations offer expert, evidence based guidelines for skill development and didactic education necessary for quality performance of ultrasound.

ACNM encourages following a didactic educational component for performance of ultrasound that includes:

- a. physics and instrumentation relevant to the exam being performed
- b. required elements and components as described by AIUM for the type of exam to be performed
- c. the required anatomic landmarks as described by AIUM pertinent to the type of exam to be performed
- d. indications for type(s) of exam(s) being performed
- e. clinical implications of normal and abnormal findings
- f. ultrasound safety
- g. components of a complete ultrasound report
- g. client education

With appropriate additional training as outlined by AIUM, ACOG or AWHONN, midwives may perform ultrasound within the midwifery scope of practice. Obstetrical ultrasound examination may be performed in all trimesters of pregnancy to obtain specific information, such as but not limited to; determining gestational age, assessing fetal well being, monitoring interval fetal growth, and maternal cervical length. It is not necessary for midwives to achieve competency in all aspects of ultrasound, but they may tailor their education and training to the specific type of ultrasound examination(s) they wish to perform.

When incorporating ultrasound into clinical practice, appropriate training, credentialing, consultation, collaboration, and referral for abnormal findings must be established and incorporated into the midwifery practice guidelines. Midwives who wish to perform technically advanced ultrasound evaluations, such as fetal anatomic surveys, may wish to seek credentialing through the American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (ARDMS). Depending on individual state laws it can be within the scope of practice for CM/CNMs to interpret the finding, report the finding, bill for insurance reimbursement, and initiate clinical management based on standard or specialized exam findings.

References

American College of Nurse Midwives, Standards for Practice (2009).

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) (2009). Ultrasonography in Pregnancy. Practice Bulletin 101. www.acog.org.

American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM) (2007). AIUM Practice Guideline for the Performance of Obstetric Ultrasound Examinations. www.aium.org

American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM) (2009). AIUM Practice Guideline for the Performance of Pelvic Ultrasound Examinations. www.aium.org

American Registry of Diagnostic Medical Sonographers (ARDMS). www.ardms.org.

Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN) (2010).
Ultrasound Examinations Performed by Nurses in Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Reproductive
Medicine Settings: Clinical Competencies and Education Guide, 3rd Edition. www.awhonn.org

Source: Division of Standards and Practice, Task Force for Midwives Performance of Ultrasound
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