



October 6, 2022

Re: Exclusion of Pro-Life viewpoints from the Midwifery Works Conference

Dear Heather, Holly, Katrina, and Cara,

As fellow medical professionals who care deeply about our patients and our members, we were very disappointed that the ACNM decided, after accepting our application and money, to cancel our educational exhibit booth at the upcoming Midwifery Works conference. We were even more disappointed that the decision to exclude us from the conference was not as communicated to us by ACNM leadership. We have exhibited at this conference in previous years and have been told by many of your members that they were glad we were there. In fact, we have over 150 midwifery members, many of whom are also members of ACNM and so we were there to represent them as well.

The reason given for canceling our exhibit booth, “We are unable to accommodate as your mission doesn’t align with our position statement on abortion. We affirm individual patient autonomy,” is a clear attempt to silence the voices of many within your own organization who do not include abortion as part of their clinical practice and who desire to educate on the peer-reviewed medical literature that show the risks abortion poses to the health of women.

This canceling of those not in agreement with your current advocacy statement on abortion also appears to be in conflict with your own articles of incorporation which clearly state that the objectives of ACNM as an organization include “To study, develop and evaluate standards for midwifery care of women and infants as provided by certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs)” and “To speak for all members of the College in relation to issues affecting the professional affairs of certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives” (emphasis mine). Does your statement on abortion and your refusal to allow differing views to be represented at your educational events represent the view of all of your members?

Respectful debate over many issues in medicine is necessary to ensure that our patients receive the best evidence-based healthcare possible. In fact, studies have shown that debate plays a critical role in medical training. The ability of every decision maker to make reasoned and ethical decisions is heavily reliant on their ability to think critically. Critical thinking is dependent on one’s ability to break down an argument into its essential parts and evaluate each based on its own merits. In order for this to happen, an open sharing of

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differing viewpoints is essential. The best advocates are critical thinkers and we are disappointed that in shutting down conversation about abortion, you are hurting your members' ability to improve their critical thinking skills.

We strongly encourage you to rethink your position on who you will allow to exhibit at future conferences and to not be afraid of an open and respectful discussion of differing viewpoints. Our duty as medical organizations is to support the development, not the stifling, of our members' professional development.

Sincerely,

Donna J. Harrison M.D. C.E.O  
American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
[www.aaplog.org](http://www.aaplog.org)  
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Attachments:  
Email correspondence with ACNM.

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