

Quality & Effectiveness of Nurse-Midwifery Practice

“Obstetrical care in the United States is burdened by soaring costs and a paradoxical inability to bring rates of infant mortality in line with those of other developed countries. A look at the costs and outcomes of obstetrical care demonstrates that a greater reliance on the use of certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) could help solve these problems. Midwifery has a good track record with regard to quality of care, it represents a good value for health care dollars, and it rates high in client satisfaction.”

Gabay and Wolfe, 1997, p. 112

The nurse-midwifery effectiveness literature begins with data from the Frontier Nursing Service published in 1928¹, includes the classic “Madera County study,” published in 1969², and was recently enriched by a study of birth certificate data from all term singleton, vaginal births attended by certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) in the United States³. These national data support the findings of numerous previous studies that document excellent outcomes in births attended by CNMs. A thorough review of this literature can be found in Chapter 10, “The quality, safety, and effectiveness of midwifery as practiced in the United States” from Judith Rooks, *Midwifery and Childbirth in America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997:295-343. Additional literature is listed below.

For information specifically addressing cost-effectiveness of nurse-midwifery care, please refer to the *QuickInfo*: Cost Effectiveness.

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