

Report US MERA Leadership Meeting April 15-17, 2016

The US Midwifery Education, Regulation, and Association (US MERA) leadership came together April 15-17, 2016, at the Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland to review the collaboration and chart a new direction for future work together. In 2013, 2014 and 2015, five participants from each of the seven member organizations participated in the annual meeting for the purpose of advancing the work of the collaboration. In 2016 the Steering Committee decided to have a smaller convening of the leadership of the now eight member organizations to allow the organizations to focus on the following:

- Recommend a refreshed shared vision for the purpose of US MERA that reflects where collaboration participants want to go as well as where we can go
- Recommend a realistic structure for a more nimble collaboration in support of the shared vision and direction
- Recommend a clear strategic direction through 2020 to focus the collaboration's work

Two participants from each of the following 8 member organizations participated: American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME), American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB), International Center for Traditional Childbearing (ICTC), Midwifery Education Accreditation Council (MEAC), Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA), National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM), and North American Registry of Midwives (NARM).

Theme of the Meeting:

The theme of the meeting was to focus on the future of the US MERA collaboration through: Re-newal, Re-discovery, Re-direction and Re-structuring.

- Re-new = working relationships
- Re-discover = vision and mission
- Re-direct = specific focus through 2020
- Re-structure = who are the players, what are their roles, who does the work

Re-New Working Relationships

The meeting opened with a work session facilitated by Jodi DeLibertis of Greater Good Consulting, designed to strengthen the capacity of US MERA collaboration members to work across individual differences as well as different organizational cultures and to spend some time renewing working relationships. US MERA accomplishments to date were reviewed as well as discussions regarding what has worked well for the collaboration and what challenging issues the collaboration has faced or continues to face.

Re-Discover Foundational Statements

The following guiding principles for the collaboration were re-affirmed:

Core Values

- Mutual value and respect for all members
- Seek to find the "third way"
- Seek consensus
- Be a socially just organization

Core Principles

- All women and families access physiologic birth care in setting of their choice
- Work to create a larger, more robust, diverse, high-quality maternity care midwifery work force
- Seek to maintain and promote innovation, flexibility, accessibility in midwifery education, multiple pathways
- Acknowledge value of accreditation of midwifery education by United States Department of Education recognized agencies (ACME and MEAC)
- Licensure for all nationally certified midwives in all states is critical to best care for mothers' and babies' health and safety
- Midwives must be enabled to provide care to the full extent of their scope of practice as defined by their professional association and their certifying body
- Midwifery care must be integrated seamlessly into the US Health Care System
- Disparities in birth outcomes experienced in communities of color must be urgently addressed

The following vision and mission statements were developed:

New Vision:

An integrative US health care system where everyone has access to midwives and midwifery care that improves health.

New Mission:

To bring together leadership and expertise to identify priorities and to be a unified, credible, recognized voice for issues that affect midwifery education, certification, accreditation, regulation, association, and practice. The goal is to increase access to high quality and culturally relevant midwifery care.

Re-Directing Focus

Five goal areas were identified in which US MERA will focus our future work.

Goal Area: Advocacy (education, information sharing and position taking)

Goal Area: Midwifery Workforce Development

Goal Area: Education (expansion of accredited midwifery pathways)

Goal Area: Legislation

Goal Area: US MERA Collaboration Self-Care (investing in collaboration capacity and well-being)

Re-Structuring US MERA

Participants broke into two small work groups to brainstorm ideas for a potential refreshed structure to support the collaboration's work in a more nimble way. The following principles were identified for building a new structure:

- Every organization has equal representation and voice
- All activity will be viewed through an equity lens
- Simplify communication to member BODs
- Improve communication to stakeholders and consumers

- Need to be nimble, efficient, goal directed
- Need to clarify what is the scope of the collaboration vs individual member organizations
- Steering committee should function like an advisory board providing direction for the collaboration and has high level leadership representatives from each member organization
- Questions, ideas, concerns related to midwifery flow into steering committee
- Might only need two standing committees for governance and communication
- US MERA project work is completed by task forces made up of content experts, stakeholders, and member organization representatives.
- Output is approved by steering committee and ratified by US MERA member organizations
- Need to clarify structure, purpose and function of the annual meeting.

The following tag line was developed for use in communications:

US MERA...The National Midwifery Collaborative

Post-Meeting Actions

The following temporary teams were formed to bring forward proposals to the US MERA steering committee to facilitate moving forward with the strategic goal areas and restructuring:

- Collaboration Identity Statement Team
- Advocacy Strategic Direction Team
- Education Strategic Direction Team
- Legislation Strategic Direction Team
- Workforce Strategic Direction Team
- Restructure Team
- Funding/Budget Team
- Facilitator Options Team
- Equity Task Force Team

Meeting Participants:

Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education ACME
 American College of Nurse Midwives ACNM
 American Midwifery Certification Board AMCB
 International Center for Traditional Childbearing ICTC
 Midwives Alliance of North America MANA
 Midwifery Education Accreditation Council MEAC
 North American Registry of Midwives NARM
 Nat'l Association of Certified Professional Midwives NACPM

Peter Johnson, Pamela Reis
 Cathy Collins-Fulea, Lisa Low
 Cara Krulewitch, Carrie Bright
 Shafia Monroe, Abigail Aiyepola*
 Colleen Donovan-Batson, Marinah Farrell
 Kristi Ridd-Young, JoAnne Myers Ciecko
 Carol Nelson, Debbie Pulley
 Mary Lawlor, Ellie Daniels

*Noelene Jeffers, ICTC Board Member & regular SC alternate attended briefly Fri. evening
 Indra Lusero, Equity Task Force, Assistant Facilitator
 Jodi DeLibertis, Lead Facilitator, Friday Evening
 Denice Hinden, Lead Facilitator, Saturday-Sunday