

## ICM 2017 A Grand Celebration and a Global Appeal for More Midwives



ICM Council Delegates

More than **4,200 midwives from around the world** converged in Toronto, Canada in late June for the 31st Triennial Congress of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). The theme was "Midwives--Making a Difference in the World" and the turnout was record-breaking, with representation from 113 countries.

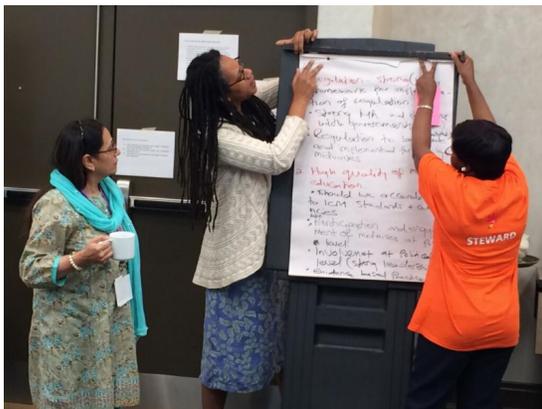
ICM's mission is "to strengthen member associations and to advance the profession of midwifery globally by promoting autonomous midwives as the most appropriate caregivers for childbearing women in keeping birth normal, in order to enhance the reproductive health of women and the health of their newborns and their families." Much of the work that has emerged from US MERA within the past five years was predicated on the ICM Global Standards for midwifery education, regulation, and association--the three pillars of professional midwifery.

NACPM became a member of the ICM in 2014, joining our sister organizations, the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) and the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA), as representatives of

midwives in the United States at the 30th ICM Triennial Congress in Prague. This year we were accompanied by over 400 midwives, student midwives, midwifery educators and researchers from all over the U.S. Your association, NACPM, sent two delegates, Mary Lawlor (NACPM Executive Director) and Tanya Khemet (NACPM Co-president) to participate in the 4-day ICM Council Meeting that preceded the Congress. Audrey Levine (NACPM Co-president) and Autumn Vergo (NACPM Secretary) attended the Council Meeting as observers.



NACPM Delegates Mary Lawlor and Tanya Khemet



Tanya Khemet participates in a Council priority setting discussion

Council is the highest governing body of ICM, and delegates have the right and the responsibility to speak out and vote on behalf of their association at Council meetings. Their role in the decision-making process for ICM is significant and includes oversight of the ICM's organizational management, approval of budgets, and voting on ICM position statements. ICM position statements convey the beliefs and principles of the Confederation, along with guidance

for its members. This includes issues that relate to the midwifery profession, maternal and newborn health, or broader social and economic issues. This year the ICM Council approved position statements on the following: the care of refugee women and their families, gender biased sex selection, appropriate use of cesarean section, role of the midwife in physiological third stage, midwifery regulation and collaboration with women, breastfeeding, and access to respectful care for those who identify as LGBTQI. This last position statement passed unanimously.

Amongst a full schedule of rich and thought-provoking scientific presentations, on everything from leadership development to outcomes in various places of birth, from building cultural understanding to increasing access to VBAC, there were a wealth of skills workshops to choose from, including preserving vaginal breech birth and the art of shared decision-making. And incredibly inspiring plenary sessions which focused on the promising impact that midwifery care has had



Audrey Levine flanked by midwives from Zambia

on the health of refugees, indigenous and aboriginal people, and other vulnerable yet resilient communities around the world.



Tanya Khemet carries the American flag at the Opening Ceremony

But it's hard to capture in words the joy and sense of shared purpose that the **March for More Midwives** generated on the first day of the Congress, or the pride we felt as NACPM Co-President Tanya Khemet paraded into the Opening Ceremony bearing the American flag alongside her colleagues from around the globe, or the giddiness of thousands of midwives at the ICM Gala, gleefully off-call and dancing the night away.

The next ICM Triennial Congress will be held in Bali in 2020. Start saving up now--it is sure to be a wondrous event!

**NACPM**

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the way we are born*

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National Association of Certified Professional Midwives, P.O.Box 340, Keene, NH 03431

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