International Day of the Midwife: Need for midwives is more than ever

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May 5 is the internationally recognized day for highlighting the work of midwives. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) [2] established the idea of the 'International Day of the Midwife' (IDM) [3] following suggestions and discussion among midwives associations in the late 1980s, then launched the initiative formally in 1992.

Each year, ICM asks the world to focus on the role of midwives and midwifery and generates a campaign theme to provide a motivating call to action for all midwives to get involved and champion their work. The International Day of the Midwife is an occasion for every individual midwife to think about the many others in the profession, to make new contacts within and outside midwifery, and to widen the knowledge of what midwives do for the world. In 2015, ICM is using the overarching theme “The World Needs Midwives Today More Than Ever” as part of an ongoing campaign to highlight the need for midwives. This reflects the World Health Organization's call for midwives and the need to accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5.

Annie Clark of URC trains health workers in Afghanistan in helping babies breathe and essential newborn care practices

ICM calls on all midwives in the world and their member associations to come together to highlight the importance of having midwives involved in the development of the new era. This is why ICM has chosen the slogan “Midwives: for a better tomorrow”. This slogan clearly states that midwives have to be involved in the work to achieve the new set of goals called the Sustainable Development Goals and create a brighter future for mothers, babies, and families.

For me, certified by the American College of Nurse-Midwives [5] in 1980, it is a time when I am considering retirement after a career spanning more than three decades as a midwife. I see it as my responsibility, as well as the responsibility of every midwife, to inspire others to pursue a career in midwifery. It is also my responsibility and the responsibility of every midwife, to share with our sister-midwives the knowledge and skills we have acquired, no matter how long we have been practicing. I began serving as a preceptor for nurse-midwifery students when I had only been practicing as a nurse-midwife for one year. Midwifery preceptors were desperately needed then, and
they are still desperately needed now. The first midwifery student I precepted, the late Mary Kroeger, went on to attend to women at home, in birth centers, in hospitals, to pursue a career in international health, and to write a highly regarded book, the *Impact of Birthing Practices on Breastfeeding: Protecting the Mother and Baby Continuum* [6] as a part of her ongoing legacy. I take great pride in knowing that I enabled her, empowered her, and contributed to the initial launching of her midwifery career. She was the first, buy by no means the last, and as I think about her and all of the other midwives who need precepting and mentoring, I am reconsidering. Perhaps I shall never completely retire after all.

**Topic(s):** Health Workforce Development [7]  
Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health [8]  
**Related Countries:** Global [9]

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