

September 17th, 2015

Midwives Alliance of North America  
P.O. Box 373  
Montvale, NJ 07645



Dear Midwives Alliance of North America Board of Directors and MANA Membership,

We are writing today in support of the revision of the MANA Core Competencies to encompass all people who experience pregnancy and give birth. Using gender inclusive language conveys that midwifery care is for all pregnant and birthing people - it does not exclude those who identify as female. What it does accomplish is the inclusion of transgender people, a marginalized group that believes they will be treated differently within the health care system 73% of the time, experiences refusal of care 26% of the time, is subject to harsh or abusive language while receiving health care 20% of the time, and rough or abusive handling by health care providers 8% of the time.

The use of gender inclusive language in communicating MANA Core Competencies is protective of those who experience marginalization, social stigma, and violent attack in the broader culture, such that transgender people are murdered once every 2 days worldwide, and the suicide rate among transgender people of childbearing age is 45% - highest among transgender men, and transgender people of black, mixed race and Native heritage.

The biological reality is that any person who has a uterus has the physiological ability to carry and birth a child. How each one of us experiences ourselves and conveys that existence to the outside world - our gender identity - is personal, individual, and valid. The midwife's role is to uphold and protect the individual nature and the autonomy of each client we serve. This does not stop at a person's gender identity, it is inclusive of it.

Therefore, the Midwives Association of Washington State supports the revision of MANA core competencies in shifting towards inclusionary language. MAWS encourages MANA to forge ahead in this important work, and to be diligent in removing all exclusionary language from its core documents. In solidarity with all birthing people, midwives of all genders, and our leaders in the national midwifery community, MAWS pledges to follow suit in the diligent removal of all exclusionary language from its core documents and practice materials. MAWS encourages all midwives to make similar efforts towards inclusion in their own practices, and to educate themselves and work towards a greater level of sensitivity in caring for transgender and genderqueer individuals.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors of the Midwives Association of Washington State

*References:*

*When Healthcare Isn't Caring, Lambda Legal's Survey on Discrimination Against LGBT People and People Living with HIV, 2010*  
*Williams Institute National Transgender Discrimination Survey, January 2014*