

December 2017

Dear Midwives,

Midwifery communities across the country are being asked to face issues regarding many inequalities and prejudice against communities including: people of colors, LGBTQQIA2S, differently-abled, and others. These missteps have manifested in ways varying from outright discrimination to simply not seeing certain communities. Here in Arizona, the Arizona Association of Midwives (AAM) recognizes our neglect in addressing these issues in the past and we are actively working to be better. We hope that being willing to see our missteps and taking steps to correct them will begin to create a safer space for those who have felt marginalized. We do not expect this work to be simple or easy, but we do believe it is necessary to strengthen our entire community and result in better care for birthing families.

As an organization, we want to begin this healing work by making the following changes in our organization:

*We are actively evaluating and updating our Mission Statement and Pillars to reflect our intention of inclusivity. This will be a work in progress while we take steps to develop a better, more inclusive community. These are available on the AAM website for public view and feedback.

*We have waived all member dues for all of 2018 in order to break down financial barriers that may prevent midwives from coming together in community. This includes new and current members. Membership benefits include referrals to your practice, member-only discounts, voting privileges to lend your voice to AAM, opportunity to be on the governing board or working committees if you choose, and peer review. Please come and be as involved as you desire. Annual dues will be reinstated beginning January 2019.

*We are actively seeking to include Midwives of Color and LGBTQQIA2S midwives on the AAM board in an effort to have all voices heard. Our president is in the process of personally speaking with all Arizona midwives known to her, and asking for feedback and involvement. Our goal is a safe environment in which every voice is important. We will listen and we need you; we humbly ask you to please partner with us!

*We have allocated monies for scholarships for midwives of color and, senior student midwives of color for continuing midwifery education. Beginning 2018, at least \$2000 (more if fundraising allows) will be available annually to be distributed to recipients, up to \$500 each. In addition, conferences put on by AAM will be free to midwives of color and student midwives of color. We will reevaluate our capacity to financially continue these programs annually.

*AAM is planning a Cultural Awareness workshop in early 2018. This workshop, including CEUs, will be free to all birth professionals and will satisfy NARM's requirements for Cultural Competency training required for all CPMs. These CEUs can also be used generally or applied to the Bridge Certificate or re-certification.

AAM respects all Arizona Midwives from all walks of life for their valuable contributions to our community. We are trusting that conversations can be held openly, frequently, and respectfully in an inclusive way to cultivate understanding. Our hope is that as we all face each other with our truths we can remain respectful and kind while we begin to navigate a future that will be better for us all. We will throw our net wide and work hard to include all.

With great respect,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam White" followed by a small heart symbol.

Pam White, Licensed Midwife and AAM board president