

# AABC and CABC - Two Distinct Organizations

The American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) and the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC), although now separate, are historically connected and work closely in many areas. CABC was founded in 1985 as a result of almost a decade of work by the Maternity Center Association/National Association of Childbearing Centers (now AABC). This chart compares the two organizations as they are today.

	
<b>TYPE OF ORGANIZATION</b>	
<p><b>Membership and trade organization</b> for established and developing birth centers and other individuals, agencies and institutions that support the birth center model of care and the national AABC Standards for Birth Centers.</p>	<p><b>Independent accreditation organization</b> for developing and existing freestanding birth centers and alongside maternity centers.</p> <p>CABC is the only accrediting body devoted exclusively to both freestanding birth centers and alongside maternity centers whose Accreditation Specialists are specifically trained to conduct site visits; and whose Review Panelists have first-hand knowledge of the philosophy, clinical care and operation of these facilities.</p>
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<p><b>Board of Directors</b> are volunteers, elected from AABC membership.</p> <p><b>Committees</b> are made of volunteer members.</p>	<p><b>Board of Commissioners</b> are volunteers, elected by sitting Commissioners.</p> <p>This diverse group of individuals fills specific pre-defined expert positions, representing midwifery, obstetrics, pediatrics/neonatology, birth center administration, parents and more. The Board includes both individuals with expertise in freestanding birth centers and alongside maternity centers.</p> <p><b>Committees</b> are made up of Commissioners and others as needed for specific expertise.</p>



Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC)

PROMOTES

Birth center model with a focus on excellence in care and operations.

Freestanding birth center and alongside maternity center accreditation as confirmation of excellence in care, practices and operations that promote evidence-based physiologic labor and birth in the midwifery model.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

**Advocates and lobbies** in legislative efforts that affect birth centers, including written or oral testimony when states are reviewing or writing birth centers regulations.

**Educates** legislative representatives about CABC accreditation and provides written assessments of birth center regulations in comparison to the CABC accreditation process. Prohibited from lobbying.

EDUCATION FOR BIRTH CENTERS

**How to Start a Birth Center Workshop** is a comprehensive 2-day workshop offered in three formats: in-person at various dates/locations, online anytime, customized on-site.

**AABC Birth Institute** is an annual convention offering clinical and administrative education sessions for birth center providers and administrators.



**Webinar Wednesday** is a monthly webinar program providing members with timely education on a variety of topics.

**Certified Birth Assistant Training** is a comprehensive and robust distance learning course that ensures employers and birth center clients that the birth assistant has ample knowledge and training to assist with labor, birth, and the immediate postpartum period.

**Birth Center Focused NRP Provider Training** is a 1-day NRP course that features skills stations that focus on repeated practice of initial steps, ventilation, and compressions until muscle memory is well-developed for these skills.

Technical and educational support while moving through the accreditation process.

CABC Newsletter to help CABC-accredited facilities remain current with updated CABC Indicators and interpretation of current national guidelines.

	 <p>Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC)</p>
<b>PROVIDES THE PUBLIC WITH...</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Directory to find birth centers.</li> <li>▪ Explanation of “what is a birth center?” in concept, values and principles, and legal terms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assurance that a particular freestanding birth center or alongside maternity center has undergone review and meets certain criteria for safety and quality.</li> <li>▪ Assurance that care practices in the facility are consistent with evidence-based practices that support and promote the midwifery model of physiologic labor and birth.</li> <li>▪ Verification of CABC accreditation.</li> </ul>
<b>RELATIONSHIP TO THE NATIONAL AABC STANDARDS FOR BIRTH CENTERS</b>	
<p>The Standards for Birth Centers are developed and maintained by AABC, and <b>AABC owns the Standards.</b></p> <p>The AABC Standards were developed in 1985 by a task force of birth center and supportive perinatal care experts. This was done because of recognition by birth center pioneers that an infrastructure of standards, licensure and accreditation was essential for the development, acceptance, and credibility of the birth center model within the health care system.</p> <p>The AABC Standards Committee reviews the standards periodically and at the request of AABC members, CABC, or other interested parties.</p>	<p><b>CABC has elected to use the AABC Standards for Birth Centers</b> as the basis for its accreditation process for freestanding birth centers, although it has no mandate to do so.</p> <p>While CABC could develop its own standards or elect to use standards developed by another organization, CABC chooses to use the AABC Standards because they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Based upon the best available evidence</li> <li>▪ Developed and maintained by people who know and support birth centers</li> <li>▪ Currently the only established national standards for birth centers</li> </ul> <p>CABC has written standards and indicators for alongside maternity centers based upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicable CABC Indicators for freestanding birth centers</li> <li>▪ Other national and international standards for the midwifery model of care.</li> </ul>
<b>Type of Non-Profit</b>	
501c6	501c3



Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC)

Type of Facility Served

Offers membership for freestanding birth centers, midwifery-led units, and organizations interested in developing birth centers.

“The birth center is a health care facility for childbirth where care is provided in the midwifery and wellness model. The birth center is freestanding and not a hospital.”

- Freestanding Birth Centers consistent with the AABC definition
- Alongside Maternity Centers:

“An Alongside Maternity Center is a midwifery-led, homelike unit that is located within a hospital but is separate from the Labor & Delivery unit. It is designed for use by women who have a low-risk pregnancy and are anticipating a normal labor and birth. Care in an Alongside Maternity Center consists of evidence-based practices that support physiologic labor and birth, and optimal breastfeeding and maternal-newborn attachment.”

## Why are the AABC and CABC separate?

It is important that the accrediting body be independent from the trade organization in order to assure the public, payers, and policymakers that the accreditation process is robust and objective.

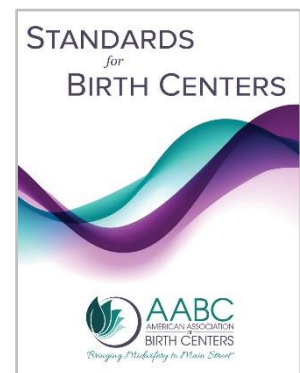
This eventual separation of the two organizations was part of the plan from the formation of the CABC. The history of CABC and AABC is similar to that of Joint Commission, which had its roots in the American College of Surgeons (ACS), which first created a hospital accreditation program. The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH) was created when the ACS joined with The American College of Physicians, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, and the Canadian Medical Association to form an independent, not-for-profit organization whose primary purpose was to provide voluntary accreditation.

## About the AABC Standards for Birth Centers

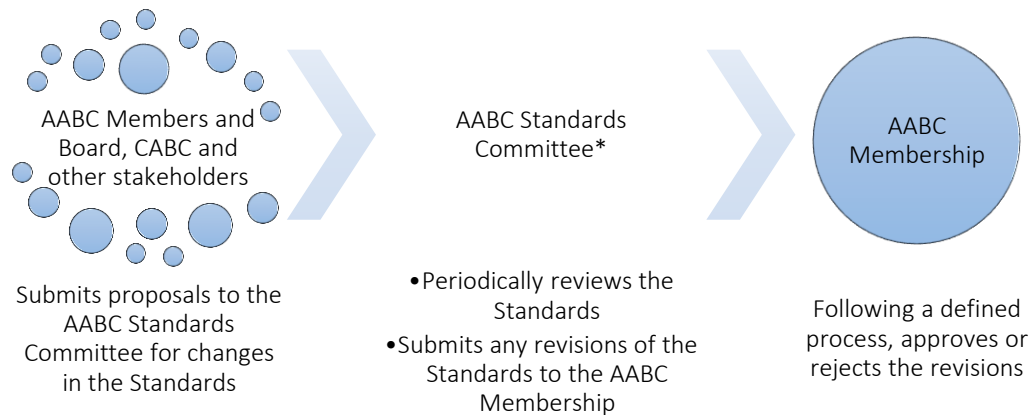
The AABC Standards for Birth Centers have withstood the test of time and much of what we know about the safety and good outcomes in freestanding birth centers is based upon the model of care reflected in these standards.

Changes to these tested standards should be made carefully and based upon the best available scientific evidence.

Standards are, intentionally, very broad guidelines, and as such, are not sufficient for CABC “on the ground” in evaluating quality in a birth center. Consequently, CABC (as well as all accrediting organizations) has developed detailed performance indicators for measuring how well the standards are being met.



## Revision Process for the AABC Standards



\* The Standards Committee is chaired by an AABC board member and composed of representatives of AABC (6) and CABC (maximum 3). All members of the AABC Standards Committee must be members of AABC.

## About the CABC Indicators

The *CABC Indicators of Compliance with Standards for Birth Centers* started out as an internal document created to provide necessary guidance for Accreditation Specialists and Review Panelists to use during the accreditation process. This document helps to determine the degree to which each freestanding birth center is adhering to the AABC Standards, as well as requirements and recommendations for improvement when indicated.

In recent years it has become a public document in alignment with the CABC's dedication to organization transparency and education. Register here to get the most current CABC Indicators and alerts about updates:

<https://www.birthcenteraccreditation.org/go/get-cabc-indicators/>



## Revision Process for the CABC Indicators



The development and revision process for the CABC Indicators also helps to identify aspects of the AABC Standards needing improvement for greater clarity or updating to align with current evidence.

### **About the CABC Standards and Indicators for Alongside Maternity Centers**

With a commitment to extending the midwifery model of care to more childbearing families, and recognizing the growing interest in midwifery-led, alongside maternity centers in the United States and the importance of careful implementation of the model, the CABC Board of Commissioners made the decision to develop an accreditation process for these facilities. Standards and Indicators were written, based upon applicable CABC Indicators for freestanding birth centers, *Improving Birth's Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative Ten Steps*, and the Midwifery Unit Network's *Midwifery Unit Standards*.