

COLORADO AFFILIATE



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



DENISE C. SMITH

PhD, CNM, FACNM

COLORADO AFFILIATE OF ACNM

Photo courtesy of CU Anschutz College of Nursing

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT • NO. 1

A Colorado Nurse-Midwife Heads to Washington

CO ACNM member Denise C. Smith has been named a 2026–2027 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellow, one of eight health professionals nationwide selected to help shape federal health policy.

We are proud to launch our new **Member Spotlight** series with news worth celebrating. Denise C. Smith, PhD, CNM, FACNM, a longtime Colorado nurse-midwife and a member of our affiliate, has been selected as a **2026–2027 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health Policy Fellow**, a program administered by the National Academy of Medicine.

Beginning in September, the fellows will spend a year in Washington, D.C., immersing themselves in health policy before serving as senior advisers to elected or appointed federal government leaders in the legislative or executive branches. For a certified nurse-midwife to hold this position is a meaningful moment for our profession and for the families whose care depends on sound maternal health policy.

About Denise: An assistant professor at the University of Colorado Anschutz College of Nursing, Denise directs the Colorado Rural Midwifery Workforce program. As project director of the Colorado Midwifery Workforce Expansion program, she helps train midwives for rural care and works to address barriers to maternal care in those communities. She has been a midwife for nearly 20 years, and before joining CU Anschutz she served in the U.S. Armed Services Nurse Corps as an officer and midwife. In 2023, her policy work was vital in the move to license certified midwives in Colorado.

Her selection reflects exactly the kind of leadership our affiliate exists to support: clinicians who carry the realities of Colorado's birthing families into the rooms where policy is written.

IN HER WORDS

Speaking with CU Anschutz, Denise noted that nurses are the largest component of the health care delivery system:

"So, we have a lot to offer. Nurses need to have a voice in policy conversations because there are many big questions that we can help solve."

Denise C. Smith, PhD, CNM, FACNM

Please join the Colorado Affiliate of ACNM in congratulating Denise. We will be following her fellowship year and sharing what it means for midwifery in our state.

NOMINATE A MEMBER

Know a current CO ACNM member whose work deserves recognition? Nominate them for a future Member Spotlight. Send the member's name and a sentence or two on why you are nominating them to communications@coloradoacnm.org.

Reporting and quotes drawn from CU Anschutz News and the National Academy of Medicine, July 8, 2026.