



What Is a Midwife?



The term “midwife” means “with woman.” Midwives are health professionals trained to provide pregnancy care, care during labor and birth, postpartum care and women’s health care throughout the life span, from adolescence through menopause. We focus on the person as a whole and view pregnancy, birth and menopause as normal stages in a person’s life. We provide respectful, compassionate care and value consent and shared-decision making. Eisner Health midwives are all certified nurse midwives (CNMs) with advanced degrees in nursing. We are trained to recognize pregnancy and health complications and work closely with physicians if more complex situations arise.



Meet the Eisner Health Midwives



Eva V. Garcia, CNM, MPH, Director of Midwifery Services

Eva has been a midwife since 2008. She received her training at the University of California, Los Angeles and Yale University. Eva is passionate about providing family-centered care and her goal is to make sure patients feel safe, heard and respected. Eva enjoys gardening, hiking and camping with her family.



Claudette Banda, CNM, PMHNP-BC

Claudette was certified as a nurse-midwife in 2012. She started off with a commitment to reproductive justice and grew into the role of birth attendant and family advocate. She recently completed additional training in psychiatry. Born and raised in Los Angeles, she considers it a privilege to serve in place..



Elizabeth Bolaji, CNM

Elizabeth Bolaji completed her midwifery education at Charles R. Drew University. She received her BSN and MSN in family nursing from Cal State Dominguez Hills. Elizabeth joined the Eisner family in January of 2022. Elizabeth is passionate about patient education as a way to empower women to take an active and informed role in their health care decisions.



Emily Carter, CNM, WHNP

Emily has her Master's of Science in Nursing from California State University, Fullerton and her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Nebraska. Emily loves yoga, camping and reading. She feels so fortunate to be a midwife and to be able to share in the experience of pregnancy and childbirth with our patients.



Maribeth Claassen, CNM, WHNP

Maribeth has her nursing and midwifery degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. In addition to births within the hospital, Maribeth has delivered in birth centers and within the home. She has been with Eisner Health since 2014. Maribeth lives in Santa Barbara, California, with her husband and three boys — the first born via C-section and the second and third via successful vaginal births after C-section (VBACs).



Tyrene Covington, CNM

Ty went to California State University, Fullerton for her Master's of Science in Nursing and the University of Texas for her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing. Ty has been at Eisner Health since 2010 and loves working at California Hospital Medical Center. She also works at Cedars Sinai and attends occasional out-of-hospital births. Ty supports waterbirth and natural birth options. She spends lots of time at the beach with her children.



Evelyn Dronberger, CNM

Evelyn was born and raised in the Inland Empire and San Gabriel Valley. They received their Master's of Science in Nursing at California State University, Fullerton in 2022 but has been supporting birthing people as a doula and labor and delivery nurse for 10 years. Outside of work, Evelyn enjoys the company of their teenage son, two cats and a dog.



Leslie Fung, CNM

Leslie Fung joined Eisner Health after completing the Nurse Midwifery program at Columbia University. Before becoming a midwife, she worked in public health research and then as a nurse in primary care clinics embedded in homeless shelters throughout New York City. She's committed to providing compassionate care and building trusting relationships with individuals throughout their reproductive health, pregnancy and birth journeys. She loves going to the beach and finds joy through food and cooking.



Cathy Jacobs, CNM, FNP

Cathy has been a midwife for 30 years and has belonged to this practice for 27 years. She received her Master's of Science in Nursing from Frontier Nursing University and her training in family nursing from Case Western Reserve University. Her particular focuses are in the Special Care (High Risk) Clinic, Centering Pregnancy and Family Medicine.



Betsy Jenkins, CNM, FACNM, MPH

Betsy has been a midwife for over 25 years and is the former Director of Midwifery Services at Eisner Health. She received her Master's of Public Health from the University of California, Los Angeles, her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing at California State University, Los Angeles, and nurse-midwifery education at the University of Southern California. Betsy has a passion for long-distance cycling and volunteers for the AIDS/LifeCycle event annually. She also loves to knit, hike and be Nana to her two grandsons.



Christina Hillson, MD

Chris is an East Coast native who grew up in Philadelphia, where she completed her schooling and family practice training. While she is trained to care for individuals in all stages of life, she is very passionate about caring for women during the special times of pregnancy and child birth. Chris moved out to California nine years ago to do additional training in obstetrics. She has worked with Eisner Health for over six years and she loves the opportunity to practice patient- and family-centered care.



Alise Howe, CNM, IBCLC

Alise started her journey in 2000 as a doula, childbirth educator and lactation educator, which led to becoming a labor and delivery nurse. She ultimately became a nurse-midwife with a master's degree from Frontier Nursing University. She believes deeply in shared decision-making and supporting people in the choices they make for their bodies and their families. She loves her work and feels that it is an honor to support people during the birthing process.



Sarah Obermeyer, PhD, CNM, WHNP-C, IBCLC

Sarah received her Master's of Science in Nursing from the Frontier Nursing University, her PhD from University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, and her International Board Certified Lactation Consultant credential from the University of California, San Diego. She believes in the way midwifery care honors the birther, and she is committed to providing trauma-informed care to give all people safe, supported midwifery care.



Mayano Ochi, CNM

Mayano has received her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing and Master's of Science in Nursing from the State University of New York, Downstate in Brooklyn, New York, and has been working in the world of birth since 2011. She is also a co-founder and the Managing Director of International Medical Response, a non-profit that supports health care workers in low-resource countries. Mayano is enjoying her newly discovered hobby, running.



Ruth Mielke, PhD, CNM, FACNM, WHNP-BC

Ruth has a long history with California Hospital Medical Center where in 1991, she started the Midwifery Program. She was the first midwife to "catch" a baby at California Hospital Medical Center, and her older son was even born here 26 years ago in room 5. Ruth is also an educator, formerly at California State University, Fullerton as the program director for the Nurse-Midwife Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Program. She is the current Associate Dean of the School of Nursing at Azusa Pacific University.



Alannah Scott, CNM

Alannah grew up in Australia, where she completed her Bachelor's of Nursing before moving to Canada and then to the US. She predominantly worked in emergency nursing but after her personal experience navigating the complex maternity system in the US, she finally decided to follow her lifelong dream of becoming a midwife. She completed her Master's of Science in Nursing at Frontier Nursing University and began working with Eisner in June 2022. Alannah believes in accessible, quality health care for all, and most importantly the right to informed choice. Alannah feels honored to be part of the Eisner team.



Mercedes Taha, CNM

Mercedes received her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from California State University, Los Angeles and her Master's of Science in Nursing from the University of California, Los Angeles. She has been caring for and supporting women through pregnancy, birth and beyond for over 15 years. She believes in empowering all women through education and helping them make informed choices about their health care.



Cindy Wee, CNM, WHNP-BC

Cindy earned her Bachelor's of Science in Nursing and Master's of Science in Nursing from the University of Pennsylvania. She is a double board-certified nurse midwife and women's health nurse practitioner. Cindy is excited to embark on this journey to provide prenatal and women's health care. In her free time, Cindy loves exploring the city for good eats and listening to her favorite artist, BTS.



Mayra Lizzette Yñiguez, CNM, WHNP, MPH

Mayra Lizzette is an Afro-Indígena Partera from Leon Guanajuato, Mexico. She immigrated to California as a child, settling in the San Gabriel Valley. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a Bachelor's in Psychobiology, minors in Public Health and Chicana/o Studies, and a Master's in Public Health. She graduated from University of California, San Francisco's Nurse-Midwifery and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner Master's Program and is currently a student in their Doctor of Nursing Practice Program. On her days off she likes to play with clay and cultivate her huerto.

**If you have a low-risk pregnancy and birth, you will be cared for by your midwife team.
If you have a high-risk pregnancy or experience a complication during your labor or birth,
you will be cared for by one of our doctors and their team of resident physicians.**

- Dr. Emiliano Chavira, Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist
- Dr. Bitu Farhadian
- Dr. Ahmad Khalifa
- Dr. Nathana Lurvey, Director of Women's Health Services
- Dr. Lillian Morris, OBGYN Department Chair
- Dr. Yahaira Plata
- Dr. Tracey Robinson
- Dr. Anthony Pickett
- Dr. Ian Tilley
- Dr. Michelle Uaje
- Dr. Penelope Velasco