

MIDWIFERY REGULATORY COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA

INFORMED CHOICE POLICY

The *Standards of Midwifery Practice* set out in Midwifery Regulatory Council Bylaws include the following (STANDARD FIVE):

The midwife promotes informed choice throughout the childbearing experience.

The midwife:

- 5.1 provides relevant information to the client in an unbiased manner;*
- 5.2 encourages clients to actively participate in decisions about their care and the manner in which services are provided;*
- 5.3 discusses with the client the scope, standards and limitations of midwifery care;*
- 5.4 acts as an advocate for the client and her newborn;*
- 5.5 respects the client's right to decline treatments or procedures;*
- 5.6 advises the client of maternity care standards and the midwife's professional judgment with respect to safe care.*

In the interactive process of informed choice, midwives encourage and give guidance to clients who want information and resources to assist them in making decisions. This process involves the promotion of shared responsibility between the midwife and her client. It is the responsibility of the midwife to facilitate the ongoing exchange of current knowledge and discussion of choices in a non-authoritarian, unbiased manner, including sharing what is known and unknown about procedures, tests and treatments related to maternity and newborn care.

The MRC requires registered midwives to provide each client with the following information at the onset of care, ideally in writing with follow-up discussion:

- midwifery education and experience of the midwives in the practice team
- services that will be provided within the scope of midwifery practice, including choice of birth setting
- standards and guidelines of midwifery practice, including:
 - continuity of care
 - consultation and transfer of care
 - supportive care
- contact information, including:

- how the client can reach a midwife in the practice team 24/7
 - change of appointment procedure
 - off-call coverage and back-up arrangements
- second birth attendant arrangements, if applicable
- responsibilities of the client and her family
- confidentiality and access to client records
- any student and/or supervised practice arrangements.

The MRC also requires registered midwives to provide each client with the following information throughout the course of prenatal, intrapartum, postnatal and newborn care:

- potential benefits and risks of procedures, tests and treatments, including available alternatives
- community and evidence-based standards and practices.

Adopted by the MRC on April 22, 2009