

Standards of Midwifery Practice

Midwives are registered health care professionals who meet all requirements of registration and licensing, continuing competency, accountability and safe, ethical midwifery practice, as defined by the Midwifery Regulatory Council (MRC) of Nova Scotia. Midwives may work in a variety of settings, including clinics, hospitals, birth centers and clients' homes and are committed to providing community based primary maternity and new born care. Midwives are required to practice in accordance with the Midwifery Act and Regulations, the policies and standards of the MRC, evidence-informed maternity care standards and policies of the employment setting in the best interest of the public.

The Standards of Midwifery Practice outline the professional practice the public can expect from a registered midwife in any setting or role. It provides a framework within which the midwife's practice may be evaluated to ensure that it is consistent with competent, safe, responsible and ethical midwifery practice. It also provides direction to midwives regarding the parameters of their practice and the professional standards they must uphold.

1. **STANDARD ONE**

The midwife practices as a primary care provider within the scope of midwifery practice

The midwife:

- 1.1 practices within the midwifery scope of practice and her own level of competence.
- 1.2 demonstrates the competencies required for the delivery of safe and ethical midwifery care;
- 1.3 manages care within the scope of midwifery practice without supervision¹;
- 1.4 is fully responsible and accountable for the care she provides;

2. **STANDARD TWO**

The midwife collaborates with other health professionals in maternity care teams.

The midwife:

- 2.1 recognizes and respects the unique and overlapping scopes of practice of other members of the team;
- 2.2 establishes collaborative relationships and networks with other health professionals and the community;
- 2.3 acts as a role model and mentor to midwifery colleagues and other healthcare providers within the team;

¹ Unless conditions on the midwife's license to practice require supervision.

3. **STANDARD THREE**

The midwife consults with and/or refers to the most appropriate health professional when the care required by the client exceeds the scope of midwifery practice.

The midwife:

- 3.1 identifies risk factors or health conditions that require consultation with/or referral to a medical practitioner or other health professional, as set out in the MRC policy “Guidelines for Review, Consultation and Transfer of Care”;
- 3.2 initiates timely and appropriate consultations with and/or referrals to the most appropriate healthcare provider;
- 3.3 shares records and relevant information with the healthcare provider who is being consulted or who is assuming responsibility for care;
- 3.4 documents appropriately in the client’s health record when a consultation and/or transfer of care has occurred.
- 3.5 may continue to provide aspects of midwifery care in collaboration with the health care provider who has assumed primary responsibility for care.

4. **STANDARD FOUR**

The midwife works in partnership with the client

The midwife:

- 4.1 develops a plan for midwifery care together with the client;
- 4.2 facilitates open and interactive communication with the client;
- 4.3 shares knowledge and relevant information with the client;
- 4.4 supports the client as the primary decision-maker in her care;
- 4.5 involves the client’s family according to her wishes;
- 4.6 respects the client’s value system and cultural needs and beliefs.

5. **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.

6. **STANDARD SIX**

The midwife ensures continuity of care throughout the childbearing experience.

The midwife:

- 6.1 provides comprehensive midwifery care during the trimesters of pregnancy and throughout labour, birth, and the postpartum period;
- 6.2 ensures, within the collaborative team, 24 hour on-call availability to clients’;
- 6.3 identifies, within the collaborative team, the midwife who is responsible for leading and coordinating the client’s care;
- 6.4 makes every effort to ensure that a care provider familiar to the client is available to attend the birth;

7. STANDARD SEVEN

The midwife provides care in appropriate settings and respects the client’s choice of birthplace within the boundaries of safety.

The midwife:

- 7.1 assesses risk and safety considerations and provides clients with the necessary information to make an informed choice about appropriate settings for giving birth.
- 7.2 assesses and ensures a safe environment for the birth experience;
- 7.3 uses safety measures to protect self and colleagues from injury and potentially abusive situations;

8. STANDARD EIGHT

The midwife ensures that no action or omission places the client at unnecessary risk.

The midwife:

- 8.1 uses current knowledge and evidence-informed guidelines to plan and implement midwifery care;
- 8.2 conducts ongoing assessments and modifies the plan of care as required;
- 8.3 responds promptly and appropriately to emergency situations;
- 8.4 maintains appropriate equipment and supplies for out-of-hospital birth;
- 8.5 does not abandon care of a client in the course of labour;
- 8.6 refers to another appropriate healthcare practitioner when necessary;
- 8.7 recognizes and reports errors and takes all necessary actions to prevent and minimize harm arising from an adverse event;
- 8.8 takes action in situations where client safety and well-being is potentially or actually compromised;

9. STANDARD NINE

The midwife maintains complete and accurate healthcare records.

The midwife:

- 9.1 uses a documentation system that facilitates accurate communication of information to clients, consultations and institutions;
- 9.2 reviews and updates records at each professional contact with the client;

- 9.3 ensures prompt documentation of professional actions, decisions and treatments, screening and diagnostic test results, informed choice discussions with the client and consultations with other professionals;
- 9.4 ensures that records are legible, signed and dated;
- 9.5 documents errors, incidents and complaints, reports to the appropriate authorities and initiates restorative actions;
- 9.6 makes every effort to document events contemporaneously and chronologically.

10. STANDARD TEN

The midwife ensures confidentiality of client information except in extraordinary circumstances where disclosure is required by law, or where failure to disclose will result in immediate and grave harm to the client.

The midwife:

- 10.1 establishes procedures and systems for storing, transferring and disposing of client records which protects the confidentiality of information within midwifery practice;
- 10.2 maintains appropriate boundaries between professional relationships and personal relationships;

11. STANDARD ELEVEN

The midwife is accountable to the client, the midwifery profession and the public for safe, competent and ethical care.

The midwife:

- 11.1 responds to and reports situations which may be adverse for clients and/or health care providers, including incompetence, misconduct and or incapacity of midwives and/or health care providers
- 11.2 informs the client as to complaint and review procedures established under the Midwifery Act and the Midwifery Regulations;
- 11.3 participates in review processes as required by institutional policies and the Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia;
- 11.4 participates in risk management and quality assurance programs as required by institutional policies and the Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia.
- 11.5 strives to maintain her own physical, mental and emotion well being and safety

12. STANDARD TWELVE

The midwife maintains competencies relevant to her scope of practice

The midwife:

12.1 engages in continuing education activities appropriate to the midwifery scope of practice, including the management of obstetrical emergencies, as required by the MRC policy;

12.2 documents and keeps records of continuing competency activities to provide to the MRC;

12.3 demonstrates current knowledge and the ability to appraise research findings relevant to midwifery practice;

12.4 engages in reflective practice and seeks feedback from clients, peers and practice partners in evaluating her practice;

12.5 participates in practice reviews to determine areas of improvement and develop learning or action plans;

12.6 integrates relevant research findings and client or peer evaluation into practice;

12.8 uses health information systems to support professional practice

13. STANDARD FOURTEEN

The midwife shall only order, prescribe or administer those drugs and substances listed in Regulations and these must be ordered, prescribed or administered in accordance with the direction provided in Schedule 1.

14. STANDARD FIFTEEN

The midwife shall only order, perform, collect samples for or interpret those screening and diagnostic tests for a woman or a new born listed in the policy and these shall be ordered, performed or interpreted in accordance with policy.