



**Midwifery  
Regulatory Council  
of Nova Scotia**

**Annual Report  
January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2020**

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Our website can be found at [www.mrcns.ca](http://www.mrcns.ca)

## About the Council

The Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia was established in 2009 to govern the profession of midwifery in the province. The Council regulates the midwifery profession in the province of Nova Scotia, Canada, in accordance with the Midwifery Act and Regulations and the Council Bylaws.

The Council is responsible for:

- (a) regulating the practice of midwifery in accordance with the registration, licensing and professional conduct processes set out in this Act and the regulations;
- (b) establishing, maintaining and promoting standards of midwifery practice; and
- (c) approving and promoting a code of ethics.

## Mandate and Mission

The **mandate** and legislated duty of the Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia is to serve and protect the public interest by regulating the practice of midwifery. The Council registers qualified, competent midwives to provide safe, high quality care to women and their families in Nova Scotia. The Council is mandated to protect the public by ensuring that all registrants engaged in clinical midwifery practice are safe, competent, and ethical practitioners.

The **mission** of the Council is to ensure that women and their families in Nova Scotia receive a high standard of midwifery care.

## Members of Council

The Council is comprised of two midwives recommended by the Association of Nova Scotia Midwives (ANSM); a registered nurse recommended by the College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia (CRNNS); a physician recommended by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia (CPSNS); and up to three public members who are not members of a health profession.

Members for 2019 are:

Theresa Pickart, R.M. (Chair)

Teri Crawford, R.N. Vice Chair (College of Nursing)

Leslee Larsen, R.M.

Dr. Anne Houstoun (College of Physicians)

Kerry Jackson R.M.

Paulette Anderson (Public representative)

Karin Wallace (Public representative)

Laura White (Public representative)

### **Council Staff**

The Registrar of the Council is responsible for planning and implementing the programs of the Council as well as the administration of the Council and its internal staffing and management. There are currently seven Council Members.

The Registrar/ Executive Director of the Council is Jenny Wright. The Registrar is the only employee of the Council. This is a part time (28hrs per week) position.

### **Message from the Chair and Registrar/Executive Director**

We are pleased to report on the accomplishments and activities of the Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia over the past year.

### **Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC)**

Nova Scotia continues to be an active member of the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (formerly the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Consortium (CMRC)), whose mandate is to facilitate inter-provincial mobility, to advocate for legislation, regulation, and standards of practice that support access to a high standard of midwifery care across the country, and to provide a forum for Canadian regulators to discuss and act on issues of mutual concern.

Representatives of each member regulator meet quarterly by teleconference and once per year in person. This year the CMRC annual conference was to be held in Prince Edward Island, however due to COVID it was held online.

Other initiatives of the CMRC are the ongoing maintenance of the Canadian Midwifery Registration Examination (CMRE), the protection of the title “midwife”, program approval and program accreditation for Canadian midwifery education programs, as well as letters of good standing between jurisdictions for labour mobility purposes

In 2020, we continue to be a member of the the Professional Practice Committee which recommends guidelines for excellence in midwifery practice, and MRCNS joined the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee. This committee served to develop a national EDI statement as well as review and revise all CRME policies with an anti-racism lens.

### **Fair Registration Practices Act Review**

The Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA) was proclaimed on December 7, 2009 and it applies to 49 regulatory bodies in Nova Scotia (covering over 58 occupations and 68 designated trades). The Act ensures that regulators and applicants are governed by transparent, objective, impartial and procedurally fair registration practices. It requires regulators to review their registration practices and level of compliance with the Act and develop a two-year Action Plan to address any gaps that are identified during the Review. The intent is to facilitate a better understanding of registration practices in Nova Scotia, reducing barriers for both nationally and internationally trained and educated applicants.

The Council continued to work towards FRPA compliance throughout 2020. Currently, we are updating our website which will improve compliance, remove barriers to employment in Nova Scotia and better educate and raise awareness with the public about midwifery in Nova Scotia.

Our focus in 2020, stage two of our website development is content review and revision to meet the needs of the Council and FRPA that facilitates ease of registration for out of province midwives seeking work in Nova Scotia and Internationally trained midwives.

### **Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (the Network)**

As a regulated health profession, the Council continues to participate in the

meetings and activities of the Nova Scotia Regulated Health Professions Network (the Network). The Network is a forum for the twenty-nine regulated health professions in the province to share capacity, information, and best practices among themselves while preserving the autonomy of each regulated health profession. The Network's focus is public safety; it upholds the quality and professionalism of healthcare professionals across Nova Scotia.

This year the Network was an invaluable resource, support, and partner in navigating the many health regulatory issues that arose due to COVID 19. The ability to share resources, disseminate and receive information quickly, as well as collaboratively navigate the changing regulatory climate was particularly beneficial for a smaller college. For more information please visit the Network's website at <http://www.nsrhpn.ca/>.

## Policy Development

Due to COVID, several regulations and guidelines were adapted to protect the public and offer clear guidelines to midwives. For example, when the suspension of homebirths was introduced, the MRCNS worked with legal counsel to create an interpretation of regulations specifically to waive the 'abandonment of a client in labour' clause within the Midwifery Standards of Practice.

We amended our screening and diagnostic test policy to include Noninvasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT).

Midwives were approved to order and administer COVID tests.

The Council continues to wait for its proposed amendments to the *Midwifery Act Regulations* **which were submitted to the Department of Health and Wellness in the Fall of 2013**. In anticipation of these changes, Council has completed a substantial body of work reviewing all of its policies, standards, and guidelines to be ready for implementation.

## General Updates

The Council continue to work with NSHA/IWK to clarify requirements for Registered Midwives to be registered in Nova Scotia, specifically focusing on internationally trained midwives and midwives who have completed bridging programs. In 2020 we were able to work with the health authorities to assist midwives in becoming registered quickly to respond to COVID.

This included three new student midwives who were hired and required a temporary exemption to the national exam due to COVID restrictions and the co-development of pathways specific to COVID for midwives practices with the health authorities and our members.

As part of our website rebuild MRCNS now has a new logo and has joined social media sites to improve education and awareness for the public, stakeholders, and our members of our role as a health regulator.

## Committees

There are two standing Committees of Council:

### 1. Registration Committee

The Registration Committee is appointed by the Midwifery Regulatory Council under the Midwifery Regulatory Council By-laws governing committees. The by-laws state that the Registration Committee shall:

- a) consider and recommend concerning any application for registration or accreditation referred to the committee by the Registrar; and
- b) make recommendations to Council respecting all applications for extension of time, reductions in requirements, equivalent experience, and other variations from the requirements of the regulations authorized by the regulations.

The Registration Committee meets as necessary as requested by the Registrar/Executive Director, Midwifery Regulatory Council of N. S.

In 2020 the Registration Committee was comprised of:

Leslee Larsen (Chair)  
Theresa Pickart (ex  
*officio*) Karin Wallace

There were no meetings of the Registration Committee this year.

## 2. Registration Appeal Committee

The Registration Appeal Committee (RAC) is appointed by the Midwifery Regulatory Council under Section 19 of the *Midwifery Act*. Upon receipt of an appeal the RAC sets a date for the hearing of the appeal which cannot be later than 60 days following the receipt of the written notice of the appeal. The RAC meets as necessary if there is an appeal of registration denied by the Registrar - Executive Director. The RAC does not retry the facts of a case. The purpose of an appeal is to review the procedures of a decision to determine if there is a basis for error. The Registration Appeal Committee prepares its written decision with reasons for the appellant.

In 2019, the Registration Appeal Committee was comprised of

Teri Crawford (Chair)  
Dr. Ann Houstoun  
Laura White

There were no appeals to the Registration Appeal Committee in 2020.

### Registration

Nova Scotia's legislation categories of active-practising membership: clinical and non-clinical. Clinical practice means the provision of antepartum, intrapartum, postpartum, and newborn care as a primary care provider. Non-clinical practice means practice that is limited to research, education, consultation, management, administration, regulations, policy, or system development related to midwifery.

In 2020, the Midwifery Regulatory Council was excited to register five new midwives in the Nova Scotia. We have 18 licensed midwives in the following categories:

17 Active-practising (clinical)	17
1 Active-Practising (non-clinical)	1

### Disciplinary Matters

The Midwifery Regulatory Council protects the public interest by ensuring that registered midwives in Nova Scotia practice safely, competently, and ethically.



Under the provisions of the *Midwifery Act*, the Registrar is required to investigate complaints regarding disciplinary matters concerning any member. Upon completion of the investigation, the Registrar has authority under section 38(8) of the *Midwifery Act* to take a variety of actions, including:

- (a) dismiss the complaint;
- (b) attempt to resolve the matter informally;
- (c) with the consent of both parties, refer the matter, in whole or in part, for mediation;
- (d) refer the matter in whole or in part, to a hearing panel;
- (e) counsel the member;
- (f) caution the member;
- (g) counsel and caution the member;
- (h) reprimand the member with the member's consent;
- (i) with the consent of the member, require the member to undergo such treatment or re-education as the Registrar considers necessary.

In 2020 there were no formal complaints filed with the Council.

## Financial

The Midwifery Regulatory Council derives some income from membership fees but most of its financial support is provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness. The Council is grateful for this financial contribution.

## Acknowledgements

The Council wishes to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of many individuals who have volunteered their time and expertise to the regulation of midwifery in the province. Gratitude is expressed to members of the Council, the Nova Scotia College of Registered Nurses, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia, The Network, Nova Scotia Health Authority/IWK, fellow provincial/territorial midwifery regulators, the Department of Health and Wellness, and registered midwives in Nova Scotia.

Respectfully,

Theresa Pickart, R.M,  
Chair

Jenny Wright, MSW, RSW  
Registrar/Executive Director