

## Public Advisory Unauthorized Practice of Midwifery

June 23, 2025

The Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia (the “**Council**”) is the regulator of the midwifery profession in Nova Scotia. It is established pursuant to the *Midwifery Act*, SNS 2006, c 18 (the “**Act**”).

In order to practise midwifery in Nova Scotia, a person must be:

- a) registered and licensed by the Council under the *Act*;
- b) a student enrolled in an approved midwifery education program and authorized by the administrators of the program to engage in the practice of midwifery; or
- c) exempted by the *Act*.

Among other things, midwives registered and licensed by the Council are subject to practice standards and regulation by the Council, have specialized and rigorous education and training, and carry professional liability insurance coverage.

The Council is aware that some individuals may be engaging in the unauthorized practice of midwifery in Nova Scotia. Unauthorized individuals who practise midwifery place the public at risk by performing unregulated services in the absence of regulatory oversight and liability insurance.

### What constitutes “midwifery”

In Nova Scotia, the practice of midwifery is defined as including any of the following activities, conducted either within or outside of a hospital setting:

- (a) the assessment and monitoring of the health of a pregnant person and their baby during pregnancy, labour, and the post-partum period;
- (b) the provision of care in the normal course of pregnancy, labour, and the post-partum period;
- (c) the management of vaginal deliveries;
- (d) the ordering and interpreting of screening and diagnostic tests and the recommending, prescribing or re-ordering of drugs restricted to actual delivery and care, blood products and related paraphernalia respecting the provision of care in the normal course of pregnancy, labour and the post-partum period; and
- (e) invasive procedures restricted to actual delivery and care.

## Who can call themselves a “midwife” and practice midwifery

Midwifery in Nova Scotia is a regulated profession, and the title “midwife” is a protected title. This means that only individuals registered with the MRCNS are authorized by law to provide midwifery care (as defined above) and to use the title of “midwife”.<sup>1</sup>

You can search MRCNS’ [online public register](#) to verify whether an individual is currently registered with MRCNS. If a person's name is not listed on our online registry, they are not a registered midwife in Nova Scotia.

## Distinguishing the roles of doulas and midwives in birth care

Doulas can contribute to creating a positive birthing experience. While doulas may provide physical and emotional support during labour and delivery, they are not permitted to provide clinical care, such as managing labour, conducting assessments, or delivering babies.

These activities are exclusively within the domain of regulated health professionals, like midwives and physicians, and performing them without proper authorization is considered unauthorized practice.

## Unauthorized practice of midwifery

Individuals who engage in the unauthorized practice of midwifery lack the training, experience, and access to life-saving medications and equipment that midwives have. Furthermore, they are not integrated into the hospital system, which can create challenges in providing emergency care when needed. This creates a significant risk to the health and safety of birthing persons and their babies.

## Reporting unauthorized providers

Unauthorized providers present a serious risk to public safety. As the regulator of the midwifery profession in Nova Scotia, we have authority to take action against these individuals. If you are aware of someone engaging in the unauthorized practice of midwifery, we encourage you to report them to MRCNS.

## Questions?

Please visit the [Midwifery Regulatory Council of Nova Scotia webpage](#) for more information on midwifery care.

You may also email us directly with your questions, at: [admin@mrcns.ca](mailto:admin@mrcns.ca).

Adapted, with thanks, from the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives’ public advisory regarding the unauthorized practice of midwifery.

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<sup>1</sup> Nothing in the *Midwifery Act* prohibits the practice by a person of medicine, nursing or pharmacy or any other health discipline recognized by statute.