



BC COLLEGE OF NURSES & MIDWIVES

As of Sept. 1, 2020, the British Columbia College of Nursing Professionals (BCCNP) and the College of Midwives of British Columbia (CMBC) amalgamated to create a new regulatory body: **British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives (BCCNM)**.

The document you are about to access reflects our most current information about this topic, but you'll notice the content refers to the previous regulatory college that published this document prior to Sept. 1, 2020.

We appreciate your patience while we work towards updating all of our documents to reflect our new name and brand.

Contact us

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REGISTRATION

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COMPLAINTS

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April 2, 2020

More COVID-19 FAQs from CMBC

Dear Midwives,

Today we continue with more answers to your questions about COVID-19, as related to home birth in other provinces, clarification on your obligation to follow a reduced/virtual antenatal visit schedule, temporary (emergency) registration, second birth attendants and more.

Q: Why are home births being banned in other provinces/jurisdictions? Could this happen in BC?

Over the past few weeks, we have seen a ban placed on home births in Quebec, Nova Scotia, and the UK. The ban in Quebec has subsequently been lifted and home birth is happening again. In all cases, decision-making has been rapid, without or with little advance notice to stakeholders, at the level of the government/public health, and in the interest of protecting providers and workforce capacity. Given that BC is moving forwards with a plan to support midwives in obtaining essential PPE for home birth, we see no reason to believe that a ban on home birth is in BC's immediate future.

However, this could change at very short notice. Currently, there is recognition that home birth for healthy, low-risk clients continues to be a safe option right now, with public health benefits, so long as the midwife can access appropriate PPE. It is possible that birth could eventually be restricted to hospital-only because of external and uncontrollable factors such as centralization of maternity services, a reduction in ambulance service (unsafe transport times) or a need to restrict essential service providers such as yourselves to a single site of practice. We are monitoring the situation closely and will provide as much notice as possible if a home birth ban becomes a likely possibility in BC.

Q: My practice partners don't want to change the way we see our clients or our schedule of visits - what should I do?

First, I want to recognize that adopting a new antenatal visit schedule, incorporating virtual technologies into the delivery of care and communicating these changes to your clients requires valuable time and significant energy from you. For these reasons, a period of transition between the "way it was" and a new way of pandemic-specific practice was not unexpected. However, the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Mike Farnworth, has used an extraordinary power under the provincial state of emergency to order that BC provide essential services only. This order states that health providers must follow the orders and guidance provided by the PHO to ensure safe operations and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. To that end, the BCCDC has released a [pandemic-specific antenatal visit schedule](#) including ways to appropriately incorporate virtual visits: this is considered the best practice guideline specific to BC midwifery practice. I strongly advise you review these guidelines together and ensure you have adjusted your practice accordingly.

Q: Are you assembling a roster of Non-practising and retired midwives eligible and interested in Temporary (emergency) registration?

Yes and no. We have reached out to all Non-practising and recently retired midwives to let them know we have enacted the Temporary (emergency) class of registration and how to apply. These registrants and former registrants are encouraged to contact CMBC to determine their eligibility for this class of registration. We are prepared, at very short notice, to expedite their registration should a need for midwifery assistance arise anywhere in the province. This approach has been carefully considered in response to how COVID-19 is currently affecting health care providers, and as such will change as needed. We will continue to update you as the situation and our approach unfolds.

Q: I'm a Non-practising midwife - may I provide a second birth attendant services during the pandemic?

If you are currently Non-practising and available to provide second birth attendant (SBA) services to General registrants, formal application to CMBC is no longer required. SBAs must meet the requirements as set out in the [Policy for Second Birth Attendants](#) in order to provide SBA services, and these requirements must be verified by the General registrant. Please review these requirements to determine your eligibility and note that continuing competency course requirements are extended and/or waived during the current pandemic.

Q: Midwives, among other essential service providers, were not included in the list released by the Ministry last week. Why and what does this mean?

The list provided was not intended to be an exhaustive of all types of essential service providers, but rather, a list of examples. Midwives are 100% essential service providers in the category of "direct to public health service providers".

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any more questions and I will connect again early next week. Thank you for your continued hard work and service- I wish you strength, good health and resilience for the days and weeks to come.

Sincerely,

Louise Aerts
Registrar & Executive Director