



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.

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March 24, 2020

Dr. Henry issues expectations for regulated health professionals during COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Midwives,

Today I am sharing with you a letter from Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry regarding an important update for regulated health professionals in BC, including midwives. The update, issued late yesterday, March 23, 2020, provides expectations for health professionals regulated under the *Health Professions Act* when providing client care in community settings. You can read the update from Dr. Henry [here](#). I ask you to take the time to read this very important letter.

Please note that the update does not apply to regulated health professionals when providing client care in hospitals, designated facilities or institutions regulated by the *Hospital Act*, the *Health Authorities Act*, the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act*, the *Mental Health Act*, or other relevant Acts.

The first expectation listed in the update reads as follows: “All non-essential and elective services involving direct physical contact with patients and clients should be reduced to minimal levels, subject to allowable exceptions, until further notice.”

These expectations confirm what CMBC has already communicated to registrants with regards to using your professional judgement to adapt your practice during a pandemic such as making modifications to visit schedules, etc. However, in light of the extraordinary situation brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CMBC will be providing more detailed guidance. We are working on a companion FAQ resource to accompany this update from Dr. Henry and will get that out to you tomorrow.

Dr. Henry’s update also outlines allowable exceptions and notes that – where possible and appropriate – health professionals are encouraged to provide care by telephone and video. We recognize that many, if not all of you have already incorporated virtual technologies and modified visits schedules in your practices. If you have not done this and are continuing to care for your clients in the same way you did pre-pandemic, we strongly recommend that you determine what aspects of client care are essential to conduct in person and adjust your practice to incorporate virtual technologies accordingly.

CMBC is acutely aware of the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) accessibility for midwives providing care in the community, particularly at time of delivery. All of the midwifery leaders in BC are working collaboratively with the Ministry of Health and the Provincial Health Officer’s team to enable midwives to gain access to required safety equipment. I hope to have updates on this aspect of the letter soon.

In the interim, CMBC supports you in adjusting your clinical practice around choice of birth place in a way that keeps you protected and your clients attended, in conjunction with your

own health needs and what your local hospital can offer you in terms of PPE. We recognize that some midwives will shift their practice to hospital birth only, until full PPE can be acquired for home birth. We recognize that despite shifting practice, some clients will continue to choose to birth at home and midwives will attend them. We also recognize that some midwives will choose to continue to offer home birth using their professional judgement and without full PPE. In all cases, CMBC supports you. Please do your best to provide care using the infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures and any PPE available to you.

We also recognized that some midwives do not have the option to use full PPE in their local hospital setting and will need to continue to attend births at home and hospital without full PPE. Again, all you can do is your best with what measures and equipment is available to you. Obtaining PPE for all midwives is a huge priority right now, and we will continue to keep you regularly updated.

It is imperative right now that you are having and documenting robust informed choice discussions with your clients, so that they may make good informed decisions about choice of birthplace. There are always risks and benefits when choosing where to give birth and there are additional risks for both client and midwives connected to access to PPE and COVID-19 to add to these discussions. Please refer to the BCCDC for the most up to date recommendations regarding PPE requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, if one of your practice partners is self-isolating or unwell, and you need to introduce another midwife (midwives) beyond the maximum four that is atypical of continuity of care, no special provisions or exemptions are required to do so during an emergency. The *Standards of Practice* are flexible in this way.

I thank you for your attention to these communications and your continued professionalism in these extraordinary times. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at CMBC. While the CMBC office remains closed, all the staff are working remotely and are here to support you. Please email us or leave us a phone message and someone will get in touch with you as soon as possible.

We realize you are getting inundated with information and updates and are doing our best to streamline information to you. We have created a dedicated page on our website for information regarding COVID-19, resources, and links to the communications we have sent. We encourage you to check back here often as the situation is changing rapidly and we will keep this page as updated as possible <https://www.cmbc.bc.ca/covid-19/>

Thank you to all,

Louise Aerts
Registrar & Executive Director