

FOR BCCNM REGISTERED MIDWIVES

Policy on alternate practice arrangements

Definitions

Standard Model: The delivery of midwifery care, subject to the Midwives Regulations, Bylaws for the BC College of Nurses and Midwives, and the Standards of Practice.

Alternate Practice Arrangement: The delivery of midwifery care, subject to the *Midwives Regulations, Bylaws for the BC College of Nurses and Midwives*¹ and *Standards of Practice* excluding Standards 6.1, 6.4 and/or 7.2.

Alternate Practice Arrangement Letter of Agreement: A document that outlines terms, duration, renewal, reporting and quality assurance requirements of the approved Alternate Practice Arrangement, as well as any conditions to be imposed on the midwives' registration upon returning to the Standard Model.

Preamble

Midwifery in British Columbia is broadly defined by the *Midwifery Scope and Model of Practice*. The *Standards of Practice* ensure consistent, safe and ethical practice within the context of a distinct model of care; these are the standards to which BCCNM holds midwives accountable.

Midwifery practice in BC exists in a dynamic environment, within the context of geographic confines, diverse client needs, interprofessional primary care collaboration, and alternate safe models of perinatal care. For this reason, BCCNM endorses flexibility with regards to specific aspects of the *Standards of Practice* with parameters in place ensuring public safety by means of alternate practice arrangements (APAs). APAs typically offer innovative approaches to the delivery of midwifery care that vary from how care is offered in the Standard Model.

¹ BCCNM does not have the authority to exempt midwives from adhering to the *Midwives Regulation* or the *Bylaws for the British Columbia College of Nurses and Midwives*.

Policy

Midwives in good standing with BCCNM are eligible to apply for and work in alternate practice arrangements (APAs). APAs are established based on community, client and/or provider need including but not limited to:

1. serving a population of clients with unique social and/or medical requirements;
2. sustainable practice amongst midwives and/or other perinatal care providers.

Midwives may apply for exemptions from Standard 6.1 (providing care during pregnancy, labour, birth and postpartum), Standard 6.4 (no more than four primary care providers known to the client), and/or Standard 7.2 (providing care in all settings) of the *Standards of Practice*. Compliance with all other standards of *Standards of Practice* while working in an APA is mandatory.

Midwives entering APAs with other perinatal care providers must share BCCNM's *Philosophy of Care* and *Midwifery Scope and Model of Practice* with the other practitioners and discuss their practical implications for sharing care. Midwives must inform their clients when they work within an APA.

New registrants may apply to join APAs; however, they must be aware of their foremost obligation to the *Policy on New Registrant Requirements* and the *Policy on Active Practice Requirements*. In their review of any *Application to Join an Established Alternate Practice Arrangement* submitted by a new registrant, BCCNM will consider the *Policy on New Registrant Requirements* and the *Policy on Active Practice Requirements*.

PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- All registrants working within an APA must meet BCCNM's two-year active practice requirements (if applicable), BCCNM's Quality Assurance Program requirements and all additional quality assurance measures set out in their APA Letter of Agreement. Failure to meet these measures or unsatisfactory results may result in the dissolution of the APA and/or a referral to the Inquiry Committee.
- A registrant working in an APA may simultaneously work within the Standard Model (e.g. as a locum in another practice) so long as they meet BCCNM Quality Assurance Program requirements for currency and competency.
- A registrant working in the Standard Model does not need to apply to join an established APA if they plan to work for less than six consecutive months in the APA (e.g. as a locum).
- Working exclusively in an APA for more than three years may result in the placement of limits and conditions on a registrant's registration when and if they return to the Standard Model. For example, a registrant working within an approved APA providing only prenatal and postnatal care for a three-year period will be required to register in the Provisional Midwife Registrant category to ensure mentorship and supervision for a specified number of births attended upon returning to the Standard Model.

- Registrants working within an APA must be aware that doing so may affect their class of registration and/or eligibility for inter-provincial registration reciprocity.

Application Process

BCCNM staff are available to meet with registrants to discuss their applications prior to submission. There are two streams to apply for an APA. Registrants interested in establishing a new APA will submit an *Application to Establish an Alternate Practice Arrangement*. Registrants seeking to join an established APA for more than six months will each submit an individual *Application to Join an Established Alternate Practice Arrangement*.

Requirements and Approval Process

Each *Application to Establish Alternate Practice Arrangement* is unique and will be approved on a case-by-case basis. Approval of one application does not constitute a precedent for approval of other applications. In reviewing each application for approval, BCCNM staff will use a standardized evaluation rubric to determine whether the APA satisfactorily meets the following requirements:

- adheres to the Midwives Regulations and Bylaws for the BC College of Nurses and Midwives;
- offers high quality and safe perinatal care in the context of proposed exceptions to BCCNM *Standards of Practice*;
- alignment with the *Philosophy of Care*;
- addresses a perinatal care need;
- plans for a high level of client satisfaction;
- improves access to perinatal care;
- contributes to health promotion and disease prevention;
- maintains or increases clinical learning opportunities for midwifery and other students;
- includes a sustainable funding model;
- includes plans for self-evaluation and quality assurance; and
- presents a transparent communication strategy for the public with regards to deviations from the Standard Model.

The process of considering an application for project approval is iterative; BCCNM staff may request supplementary materials and/or escalate the application to a Panel of the QA Committee for final consideration.

Only midwives who have been approved following an application process under established BCCNM criteria may work for six or more consecutive months within the specified APA. Once approved, each applicant registrant will sign an individual Alternate Practice Arrangement Letter of Agreement.

Registrants must provide BCCNM with as much notice as possible prior to ceasing to practice within an APA.

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900 – 200 Granville St,
Vancouver, BC V6C 1S4
Canada

www.bccnm.ca

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