

PRACTICE STANDARD

Midwives: Home & Community Birth

Introduction

This practice standard sets the expectations that midwives must meet when providing intrapartum and postpartum care in home and community settings. Midwives offer care in a variety of settings such as hospitals and community settings such as homes, clinics, or birthing centres, where specialized medical, obstetrical, neonatal, surgical, and anaesthetic services are not available on site. In all settings, midwives must follow relevant regulations, BCCNM's standards, and applicable policies and processes.

Standards

When providing intrapartum and postpartum care to clients in home and community settings, midwives:

1. Carry and maintain the equipment, medications, and supplies as listed by Perinatal Service of British Columbia [Equipment, Medications and Supplies for Home and Community Labour and Birth](#).
2. Follow evidence-informed procedures to prevent and control infection, including cleaning, disinfecting, and sterilizing equipment appropriately.
3. Ensure equipment and supplies are working correctly and that equipment, supplies, and medications are stored appropriately and not expired.
4. Ensure they maintain competency to provide care, including recognizing and managing complications and emergencies.
5. Maintain situational awareness and recommend transfer to a setting that offers higher level of care (e.g. a setting where medical, obstetrical, neonatal, surgical, and/or anaesthetic services are available), when necessary, based on the evolving situation including but not limited to emerging risk factors, poor or changing weather conditions, availability of an additional attendant, etc.
6. Initiate consultation and/or transfer of care when appropriate or required.
7. Ensure that at least one qualified additional attendant is present to assist for the birth and immediate postpartum period. The qualified additional attendant must:
 - a. Be either:
 - i. a licensed or regulated health professional holding practising/current registration or licensure, whose regulated scope of practice includes the services described in 7c. below,¹ OR

¹ This would ordinarily be a midwife, registered nurse, or nurse practitioner with current practicing registration with BCCNM, a physician with current practicing registration with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, or a paramedic currently licensed by the Emergency Medical Assistants Licensing Board.

- ii. a fourth-year midwifery student in their final semester or a student in an internationally educated midwives bridging program in their supervised clinical practicum; and
 - b. Hold current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification, neonatal resuscitation (NRP) and obstetrical emergencies skills training; and
 - c. Be competent in the clinical skills necessary to support a primary midwife with intrapartum and postpartum care in home and community settings, including performing venipuncture, intravenous and intramuscular medication administration, resuscitation, oxygen therapy and documentation.
8. Supervise the provision of care provided by an additional attendant who is a student.
 9. Communicate and collaborate with additional attendant(s) regarding the clinical situation, roles, and responsibilities, and provide orders or instructions as required.
 10. Contact emergency health services if there is an emergency or a need for urgent transport.
 11. Ensure there is an agreed upon emergency transport plan with the receiving hospital and emergency health services, which includes communication channels, processes, and the roles and responsibilities of all involved.
 12. Contemporaneously document informed choice discussions, recommendations, plans, decisions, and actions to maintain complete records.

Limits and conditions

1. A midwife must hold hospital privileges in the community where they offer home and/or community birth OR they must work with at least one other perinatal care provider who has intrapartum hospital privileges and can be on call and available for clients in case of hospital transfer (as per BCCNM's [Hospital Privileges](#) practice standard).
2. Until a midwife meets the [Policy on New Registrant Requirements](#), their additional attendant must be a practicing, provisional, or temporary emergency midwife registrant who has met the [Policy on the New Registrant Requirements](#) and is competent to provide home and/or community intrapartum care.

Revision history

Version #	Approved by board	Bylaw in-force	Description
1.0	March 1, 2026	April 1, 2026	Initial publication

Effective April 1, 2026, this practice standard, and any amendments to it, is made a bylaw under the authority of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act, B.C.*

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