

Consultation, Referral, and Transfer of Care

This practice standard applies to registered midwives.

Introduction

Practice standards set out requirements related to specific aspects of midwifery practice. They link with other standards, policies, and bylaws of the BC College of Nurses and Midwives and all legislation relevant to midwifery practice.

This practice standard sets the expectations midwives must meet when requesting or receiving a consultation, referral or transfer of care.

Standards

1. Midwives **consult, refer, and/or transfer care** to another health professional:
 - a. In alignment with relevant legislation and regulations and BCCNM's standards, limits, and conditions,
 - b. In alignment with organizational policies and processes,
 - c. When the client's care needs are beyond the midwife's **scope of practice**, and/or
 - d. When the expertise of other health professionals would be in the best interest of the client.
2. Midwives communicate with their clients when a consultation, referral, and/or transfer care is indicated.
3. Midwives ensure timely initiation of and follow-up on consultations, referrals, or transfers of care, taking into consideration clinical urgency, geography, and other factors.
4. Midwives collaborate with their clients and the health-care team to coordinate care.
5. When consulting, referring, and/or transferring care, midwives ensure the **most responsible provider (MRP)** is clearly identified to the client and the health-care team and is documented in the client's record.
6. Midwives may continue to provide midwifery care within their scope of practice when transfer of care is necessary.

7. When consulting with, referring, to or transferring care to another health-care professional, midwives:
 - a. Present the reason for and urgency of the request,
 - b. Describe the level of involvement requested,
 - c. Provide relevant, complete, and accurate client health information, including details of any informed choice decisions made by the client,
 - d. Confirm the health professional's ongoing level of involvement with the client, and
 - e. Document the request for and outcome of the consultation, referral, or transfer.
8. When responding to a consultation, referral, or transfer of care request from another health professional, midwives:
 - a. Confirm the reason for and urgency of the request,
 - b. Confirm the level of involvement requested,
 - c. Ensure access to relevant client health information and notify the health professional if they are unable to provide a consultation or accept the referral or transfer,
 - d. Confirm their ongoing level of involvement with the client and MRP if the request is accepted, and
 - e. Document and communicate the outcome to the MRP.
9. Midwives confirm with the client the completion of midwifery care and facilitate a transfer of care to another primary care provider if indicated.

Glossary

Consultation - A request from one health professional (e.g., midwife, physician, nurse practitioner, physiotherapist) to another to provide input, advice, or guidance on the management of client care.

Most Responsible Provider (MRP) - The regulated health professional who is responsible for the overall management and coordination of client care.

Referral - A request from one health professional (e.g., midwife, physician, nurse practitioner) to another to assume responsibility for management of one or more aspects of a client's care.

Scope of practice - The activities that registered midwives are educated, competent, and authorized to perform.

Transfer of Care - The transfer of overall responsibility, management, and coordination of client care to another regulated health professional who then becomes the client's MRP.

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