

Standards for the Practice of Midwifery

Midwifery practice as conducted by certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) and certified midwives (CMs) is the independent management of women's health care, focusing particularly on pregnancy, childbirth, the post partum period, care of the newborn, and the family planning and gynecologic needs of women. The CNM and CM practice within a health care system that provides for consultation, collaborative management, or referral, as indicated by the health status of the client. CNMs and CMs practice in accord with the Standards for the Practice of Midwifery, as defined by the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM).

STANDARD I

MIDWIFERY CARE IS PROVIDED BY QUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS

The midwife:

1. Is certified by the ACNM designated certifying agent.
2. Shows evidence of continuing competency as required by the ACNM designated certifying agent.
3. Is in compliance with the legal requirements of the jurisdiction where the midwifery practice occurs.

STANDARD II

MIDWIFERY CARE OCCURS IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND A SYSTEM OF HEALTH CARE.

The midwife:

1. Demonstrates knowledge of and utilizes federal and state regulations that apply to the practice environment and infection control.
2. Demonstrates a safe mechanism for obtaining medical consultation, collaboration, and referral.
3. Uses community services as needed.
4. Demonstrates knowledge of the medical, psychosocial, economic, cultural, and family factors that affect care.
5. Demonstrates appropriate techniques for emergency management including arrangements for emergency transportation.
6. Promotes involvement of support persons in the practice setting.

STANDARD III

MIDWIFERY CARE SUPPORTS INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND SELF-DETERMINATION WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF SAFETY

The midwife:

1. Practices in accord with the Philosophy and the Code of Ethics of the American College of Nurse-Midwives.
2. Provides clients with a description of the scope of midwifery services and information regarding the client's rights and responsibilities.
3. Provides clients with information regarding, and/or referral to, other providers and services when requested or when care required is not within the midwife's scope of practice.
4. Provides clients with information regarding health care decisions and the state of the science regarding these choices to allow for informed decision-making.

STANDARD IV

MIDWIFERY CARE IS COMPRISED OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND JUDGMENTS THAT FOSTER THE DELIVERY OF SAFE, SATISFYING, AND CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE.

The midwife:

1. Collects and assesses client care data, develops and implements an individualized plan of management, and evaluates outcome of care.
2. Demonstrates the clinical skills and judgments described in the ACNM Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice.
3. Practices in accord with the ACNM Standards for the Practice of Midwifery.
4. Practices in accord with service/practice guidelines that meet the requirements of the particular institution or practice setting.

STANDARD V

MIDWIFERY CARE IS BASED UPON KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND JUDGMENTS WHICH ARE REFLECTED IN WRITTEN PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The midwife:

1. Describes the parameters of service for independent and collaborative midwifery management and transfer of care when needed.
2. Establishes practice guidelines for each specialty area which may include, but is not limited to, primary health care of women, care of the childbearing family, and newborn care.
3. Includes the following information in each specialty area:
 - a) Client selection criteria
 - b) Parameters and methods for assessing health status
 - c) Parameters for risk assessment
 - d) Parameters for consultation, collaboration, and referral
 - e) Appropriate interventions including treatment, medication, and/or devices.

STANDARD VI

MIDWIFERY CARE IS DOCUMENTED IN A FORMAT THAT IS ACCESSIBLE AND COMPLETE.

The midwife:

1. Uses records that facilitate communication of information to clients, consultants, and institutions.
2. Provides prompt and complete documentation of evaluation, course of management, and outcome of care.
3. Promotes a documentation system that provides for confidentiality and transmissibility of health records.
4. Maintains confidentiality in verbal and written communications.

STANDARD VII

MIDWIFERY CARE IS EVALUATED ACCORDING TO AN ESTABLISHED PROGRAM FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT THAT INCLUDES A PLAN TO IDENTIFY AND RESOLVE PROBLEMS.

The midwife:

1. Participates in a program of quality management for the evaluation of practice within the setting in which it occurs.
2. Provides for a systematic collection of practice data as part of a program of quality management.
3. Seeks consultation to review problems, including peer review of care.
4. Acts to resolve problems identified.

STANDARD VIII

MIDWIFERY PRACTICE MAY BE EXPANDED BEYOND THE ACNM CORE COMPETENCIES TO INCORPORATE NEW PROCEDURES THAT IMPROVE CARE FOR WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES.

The midwife:

1. Identifies the need for a new procedure taking into consideration consumer demand, standards for safe practice, and availability of other qualified personnel.
2. Ensures that there are no institutional, state, or federal statutes, regulations, or bylaws that would constrain the midwife from incorporation of the procedure into practice.
3. Demonstrates knowledge and competency, including:
 - a) Knowledge of risks, benefits, and client selection criteria.
 - b) Process for acquisition of required skills.
 - c) Identification and management of complications.
 - d) Process to evaluate outcomes and maintain competency.
4. Identifies a mechanism for obtaining medical consultation, collaboration, and referral related to this procedure.
5. Reports the incorporation of this procedure to the ACNM.

Source: Division of Standards and Practice
Approved: ACNM Board of Directors, March 8, 2003

(Supersedes the ACNM's Functions, Standards and Qualifications, 1983 and Standards for the Practice of Nurse-Midwifery 1987, 1993. Standard VIII has been adapted from the ACNM's Guidelines for the Incorporation of New Procedures into Nurse-Midwifery Practice)