

Standard:	Policy Regarding Informed Choice
Approved By:	Council
Date Approved:	February 2015
Date to be Reviewed:	
Effective Date:	September 2016



POLICY REGARDING INFORMED CHOICE For Midwives Practising in Newfoundland and Labrador

Informed Choice

Informed choice is a fundamental principle of midwifery care in Newfoundland and Labrador. Women are the primary decision-makers and have the right to receive information and be involved in the decision-making process throughout their midwifery care. The interactive process of informed choice involves the promotion of shared responsibility between the midwife and her client. Midwives encourage and give guidance to clients wishing to seek out resources to assist them in the decision-making process. It is the responsibility of the midwife to facilitate the ongoing exchange of current knowledge in a non-authoritarian and cooperative manner, including sharing what is known and unknown about procedures, tests and medications. Each midwife has the continuing responsibility to practice according to accepted guidelines of the profession and may decline to be involved in care that is outside of accepted practice guidelines.

Midwives shall facilitate informed decision-making by:

- Fostering a relationship of trust and respect between midwife and client.
- Providing relevant information in a collaborative and non-authoritarian manner.
- Considering the experience, feelings, beliefs, values and preferences of the client.
- Making a best effort to ensure the client fully understands all relevant information prior to making a decision.
- Allowing adequate time for decision-making by the client.
- Supporting the client's decision.
- Individualizing care and being sensitive to the woman's wishes and changes in the woman's circumstances throughout pregnancy.

The College of Midwives of Newfoundland and Labrador requires that registered midwives provide each client with the following information at the onset of their care, ideally given in writing and followed up in discussion:

- Education and experience in midwifery of the midwives in the practice;
- Services provided, including: core competencies, philosophy of care and choice of birth setting;
- Contact information, including how the client can reach a midwife known to her 24 hours a day, change of appointment procedure, off-call coverage arrangements, and back-up arrangements;
- Second attendant arrangements, if applicable. Where a midwife is in solo practice and cannot make arrangements for on-call coverage by another midwife, she must inform her

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client of how to access an alternate primary caregiver when she is off-call. Ideally that alternate care provider would also be known to the woman.

- Standards of practice and protocols, including: continuity of care, consultation and transfer of care and supportive care;
- Role and responsibilities of the client;
- Confidentiality and access to client records;
- Any student and/or supervised practice arrangements.

The College of Midwives of Newfoundland and Labrador requires registered midwives to provide each client with the following information throughout the course of care:

- Potential benefits and risks of, and alternatives to, procedures, tests and medications, including the risks of not having any particular test, procedure or medication;
- Relevant research evidence, including any deficiency of clear evidence;
- Relevant community standards and practices;
- Identification of the midwife's bias, if significant.

Midwives must document all informed choice discussions, recommendations (if any) and the client's decision regarding her care. In the event a client chooses care outside of community standards, more extensive documentation should be considered in compliance with the Policies when a *Client Chooses Midwifery Care outside the Scope of Practice* and the *Standards for Midwifery Practice*.

References

College of Midwives of British Columbia (2000). Informed Choice Policy
<http://www.cmbc.bc.ca/pdf.shtml?Registrants-Handbook-11-07-Informed-Choice-Policy>

College of Midwives of Ontario (2014). Informed Choice.
<http://www.cmo.on.ca/resources/STANDARDS-OF-PRACTICE/1.%20MIDWIFERY%20MODEL/B.%20MIDWIFERY%20MODEL%20OF%20CARE/INFORMED%20CHOICE/Informed%20Choice.pdf>

Saskatchewan College of Midwives (2008) Informed Choice
http://www.saskmidwives.ca/assets/File/policies/Informed_Choice.pdf