

January 1994

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SECOND BIRTH ATTENDANT**

The College of Midwives recommends that the midwifery practice assess the knowledge and competence of the second birth attendant(s)<sup>1</sup>

1. Assessment of basic vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, respirations, temperature);
2. Postpartum assessment of uterine tone and position;
3. Basic record keeping;
4. Knowledge of labour and birth;
5. Knowledge and understanding of midwifery in Ontario, including the regulation, standards, policies and guidelines of the College of Midwives of Ontario;
6. Body substance precautions;
7. Basic knowledge of instruments, supplies, drugs and gases used by midwives;
8. Neonatal resuscitation;
9. Adult cardiopulmonary resuscitation (BCLS);
10. Knowledge and understanding of the midwifery practice's protocols.

The midwifery practice may use multiple evaluation processes including interviews, oral assessments, review of documentation such as references, registration certificates from other colleges regulated in Ontario and certifications for cardiopulmonary and neonatal resuscitation. A probationary period may be set up for the second birth attendant(s) and they may be supervised for evaluation purposes during this time.

Documentation of this process should be maintained by the midwifery practice and the

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<sup>1</sup> See *Second Birth Attendant Not Authorized Under Both the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 and the Midwifery Act, 1991*, College of Midwives of Ontario, 1994.

second birth attendant(s). Each midwifery practice that has received approval of the *Temporary Alternate Practice Arrangements Within the Model of Midwifery Practice* must be prepared to demonstrate to the College of Midwives of Ontario the knowledge and competence of their second birth attendant(s).

## **Potential Second Birth Attendants**

Physician  
Nurse  
Aboriginal Midwife<sup>2</sup>  
Community Health Representative  
Ambulance Officer  
Senior Midwifery Student  
Other Person

## **Recommended Roles and Duties of a Second Birth Attendant**

Sole attendance with a woman in labour is not considered an appropriate responsibility for the second birth attendant.

## **First and Second Stages of Labour**

- \* provides assistance to the midwife
- \* provides support to the woman
- \* checks layout of supplies, ensures accessibility of drugs and instruments
- \* monitors and charts fetal heart rate in second stage of labour (fetoscope, doppler)
- \* charting

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<sup>2</sup> The *Midwifery Act, 1993* Section 8 (3) states that "An Aboriginal person who provides traditional midwifery services may (a) use the title "Aboriginal midwife," a variation or abbreviation, or an equivalent in another language; and (b) hold himself or herself out as a person who is qualified to practise in Ontario as an Aboriginal midwife."

A traditional Aboriginal midwife is able to provide midwifery services to Aboriginal women. When providing care to non-Aboriginal women, the traditional midwife will be considered a second birth attendant not authorized under both the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* and the *Midwifery Act, 1991*.

## **Birth**

- \* ensures warmth of newborn
- \* checks, reports and records newborn's condition
- \* AGPAR assessment

## **Postpartum**

- \* provides assistance to the midwife
- \* provides support and assistance to the woman
- \* checks maternal blood pressure, pulse, fundus as directed
- \* assists midwife in setting up for suturing
- \* helps to clean up and pack midwifery equipment

## **Emergency Situations**

- \* phones Emergency Medical Services as directed
- \* assists with neonatal resuscitation
- \* assists midwife in setting up intravenous/drug therapy for treatment of postpartum hemorrhage
- \* checks maternal blood pressure and pulse as directed
- \* assists in preparation for transport

A written agreement between the midwife and each individual second birth attendant which outlines role definitions and responsibilities should be signed and maintained by the midwifery practice and the second birth attendant(s).