

Standard:	Home and Out-of-Hospital Births
Reference #:	STCMO_Cog252013
Approved by:	Council
Date Approved:	September 25, 2013
Date to be Reviewed:	January 2016
Rescinded:	June 1, 2018
Effective date:	January 1, 2014
Attachments:	none



HOME AND OUT-OF-HOSPITAL BIRTHS

Purpose

The purpose of this standard is to clarify the College of Midwives of Ontario's ("CMO") expectations of midwives offering and attending home and other out-of-hospital births.

Midwifery standards of practice refer to the minimum standard of professional behaviour and clinical practice expected of midwives in Ontario.

Definition

Homebirth refers to a planned birth in the client's home. Out-of-hospital birth refers to a planned birth in a location of the client's choice other than a public hospital, including home.

Background

Choice of birthplace is a fundamental principle of midwifery care. Midwives recognize clients as primary decision-makers in their health care and support them in choosing the most appropriate setting for their birth. Midwives provide clients with the necessary information required to make informed decisions regarding place of birth. Midwives have attended home and out-of-hospital births since prior to the regulation of the profession in 1994, with excellent safety and satisfaction outcomes.

The literature on Ontario homebirths demonstrates that planned homebirths with a well-screened population of women, within a supportive health care system, and attended by professionally trained midwives carrying emergency equipment, are as safe as planned hospital births. Similar outcomes have been shown in other jurisdictions with comparable models of midwifery care.

The view of birth as a normal physiologic process is central to the midwifery philosophy of care. The promotion of normal birth and the reduction of unnecessary interventions in pregnancy and childbirth are recognized as essential factors to improving maternity care outcomes. The CMO supports the belief that promoting and supporting home and out-of-hospital birth contributes to the safeguarding of normal birth.

The CMO recognizes that maternity care standards and guidelines developed by non-midwifery



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maternity care organizations are typically created in the context of hospital birth. As a result, some maternity care standards and guidelines may not be fully realized in home and out-of-hospital settings. Midwives may be required to make appropriate adaptations to maternity care standards in the context of home and out-of-hospital birth.

Standard

To support the continued safety and availability of home and out-of-hospital birth midwives must:

- Maintain competency in providing care in all settings.
- Maintain competency in the management of obstetrical emergencies.
- Maintain hospital privileges.
- Comply with all CMO standards of care.
- Provide clients with informed choice discussions regarding planned place of birth as per the CMO standard on Informed Choice.
- Inform clients of the management of common obstetrical emergencies at out-of-hospital versus hospital settings.
- Inform clients that the excellent outcome data on homebirth is dependent on screening for complications.
- Appropriately screen clients throughout the course of care and use clinical judgment to make recommendations regarding place of birth.
- Support the client's choice of birthplace, after they have carefully considered relevant information and recommendations.
- Ensure that safe transport to hospital for emergency situations is available for clients choosing a home or out-of-hospital birth.
- Develop a practice protocol on planned place of birth.¹

¹ Midwives must be in compliance with the CMO Practice Protocol Standard as of January 1st 2015.