

POLICY FOR SECOND BIRTH ATTENDANTS

Preamble

Midwives are required to attend home births with a second attendant who is another practicing registered midwife, a licensed physician, or a College of Midwives of BC (CMBC) approved second birth attendant with current certification in neonatal resuscitation (NRP) and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). While the ideal second attendant at a home birth is another midwife, CMBC recognizes that the second attendant chosen by the principal midwife depends on the availability of appropriate professionals in that geographic area.

A midwife may work with a licensed physician as their second attendant without additional approval from CMBC. A midwife who wishes to work with a second birth attendant who is not a currently practicing midwife, or licensed physician must seek approval from CMBC as outlined in this policy.

Policy

When a midwife has been approved by CMBC to attend births with a second birth attendant, the midwife is responsible for ensuring that care provided is safe and in accordance with CMBC's *Philosophy of Midwifery Care, Code of Ethics and Midwifery Scope and Model of Practice*.

Restricted activities must not be delegated by a midwife to a second birth attendant who is not otherwise legally authorized under the *Health Professions Act* and their own profession's regulation to perform those activities. The midwife may only ask a second birth attendant to provide client care within the roles and duties outlined in this policy and must not ask the second birth attendant to take primary care responsibility for a client in active labour. All care provided by a second birth attendant must be carried out under the direct supervision of the midwife. The midwife must be present at the birth with a second birth attendant and is fully responsible for decision-making and any care that the second attendant provides.

It is the responsibility of the principal midwife attending a home birth with a second birth attendant who is not a currently practicing registered midwife or licensed physician to ensure that:

1. The second birth attendant has current training in the following:
 - NRP at CMBC's required level (1-11); and
 - CPR at CMBC's required level for health care providers.
2. The second birth attendant is knowledgeable and competent in the following:
 - assessment of vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respirations);
 - postpartum assessment of uterine tone and position, and blood loss;
 - universal precautions and assisting with clean and sterile procedures;
 - basic knowledge of labour and birth;
 - basic knowledge of instruments, supplies and drugs used by midwives;
 - appropriate record keeping;

- providing appropriate assistance in the management of neonatal and obstetric emergencies; and
- basic knowledge and understanding of midwifery in B.C. and the midwife's practice protocols.

Second Birth Attendants Eligible for CMBC Approval

A midwife may apply to have any of the following individuals approved as a second birth attendant:

- Non-practising registered midwife;
- Graduate of a recognized midwifery education program within the current registration year, who has not yet registered as a midwife with CMBC;
- Registered nurse;
- Nurse practitioner;
- Licensed practical nurse;
- Emergency medical responder or paramedic;
- Respiratory therapist; and/or
- Any other regulated or licensed health care provider within BC who can provide NRP as a part of their professional role.

If none of the above are available, a midwife may apply to have another appropriately trained person approved as a second birth attendant. The midwife must submit to CMBC and keep on file documentation of the attempts to obtain second attendant support from those on the list above.

Exception

A midwife who is designated as a clinical preceptor for a senior midwifery student (clerkship¹ or equivalent) from a CMBC-recognized midwifery education program or bridging program is permitted to have that student act as in the role of second attendant without CMBC approval. It is at the discretion of the midwifery education program or bridging program in which the student is enrolled as to whether a senior student may act in the role of second birth attendant for a midwife who is not one of the student's designated clinical preceptors.

Duties of a Second Birth Attendant

The second birth attendant is expected to be present with the principal midwife for the second and third stage of labour and until both maternal and newborn clients are stable in the immediate postpartum. At the discretion of the principal midwife in attendance, a second attendant may be asked to be present prior to the second stage of labour.

The following are recommended duties of a second birth attendant:

During the late first stage or second stage of labour

- Provide assistance to the midwife.
- Provide support to the client.

¹ A student in the clerkship portion of the program of midwifery education is in the final term of their midwifery education. The student has successfully completed certification in Emergency Skills Program and the program has assessed the student to be competent to provide primary care under direct supervision.

- Check layout of supplies to ensure accessibility of drugs and instruments.
- Auscultate, record and report the fetal heart rate to the midwife.
- Check, record and report maternal blood pressure and pulse to the midwife.
- Document in the health care record at the direction of the midwife.

During birth

- Provide assistance to the midwife.
- Ensure warmth and safety of the newborn.
- Check, record and report the condition of the newborn to the midwife.
- Document in the medical record at the direction of the midwife.

Postpartum

- Provide assistance to the midwife.
- Provide support and assistance to the client.
- Check, record and report maternal blood pressure, pulse, fundus and lochia to the midwife.
- Document in the medical record at the direction of the midwife.

In an emergency situation

- Phone Emergency Medical Services.
- Assist the midwife with NRP.
- Assist the midwife in setting up intravenous fluid/drug therapy for postpartum haemorrhage.
- Check maternal, fetal or newborn vital signs and report to the midwife.
- Assist the midwife with CPR.
- Assist the midwife in the management of other emergency situations.
- Assist in preparation for transport.
- Document in the medical record at the direction of the midwife.

The second birth attendant's role in situations such as precipitous delivery, hemorrhage, infant resuscitation, meconium-stained amniotic fluid and shoulder dystocia should be clearly agreed upon ahead of time and routinely reviewed.

A written agreement between the midwife and the second birth attendant outlining roles and responsibilities should be maintained by each midwife or group of midwives working with that second birth attendant. Midwives should be aware that the use of second birth attendants outside the roles and responsibilities outlined in this policy may affect their professional liability coverage.

Application Guidelines and Approval Process

1. Only General or Temporary Registrants with no limits or conditions on their registration and who have been registered in BC or another regulated Canadian province or territory for a minimum of six months² can apply for a person to be approved as a second birth attendant. The application must be made by the midwives. CMBC will not accept an application from a proposed second birth attendant directly.

² Refer to the *Policy on New Registrant Requirements* for details.

2. The midwife or midwives applying for second birth attendant approval must complete the *Request for Approval of Second Birth Attendant* and provide CMBC with the following information about the proposed second attendant(s):
 - their health licensing or regulatory body membership registration number or a photocopy of their current registration card as proof of registration;
 - information taken directly from their current NRP card (issued within the last year) verifying CMBC's required levels 1-11 or a photocopy of their current NRP card (the midwife must keep a photocopy of this card on file and make it available to CMBC upon request);
 - information taken directly from their current CPR certificate (issued within the last two years) verifying certification at CMBC's required level or a photocopy of their current CPR certificate (the midwife must keep a photocopy of this certificate on file and make it available to CMBC upon request); and
 - if the proposed second birth attendant is a registered nurse trained in and currently practicing as an obstetrical nurse, the name of the hospital where the nurse is currently employed.

Incomplete applications will not be processed by CMBC.

3. Confirmation that the proposed second birth attendant has undergone criminal record clearance in the past five years. The criminal record check may be arranged through CMBC, or a copy of a current criminal record clearance may be forwarded to CMBC from the proposed second birth attendant's health professional regulatory body. Information on obtaining a criminal record check, including the process and fee, will be provided after CMBC receives the application.
4. Second birth attendants as outlined in the "Second Birth Attendants Eligible for CMBC Approval" section who are either in good standing with their licensing/regulatory body or who can provide proof of completion of a CMBC-recognized midwifery education program within the current registration year may be approved by a CMBC staff member designated by CMBC's Registrar or Deputy Registrar, based on fulfilling the requirements of this policy. Approval may be granted for a period of up to one year, expiring no later than March 31 of the current registration year. Any concerns about the approval of these second birth attendant applications will be referred to the Approval Panel of the Quality Assurance Committee for review.
5. Requests for approval of other appropriately trained persons not listed in the "Second Birth Attendants Eligible for CMBC Approval" will be reviewed and approved by the Approval Panel of the Quality Assurance Committee.
6. Approved second birth attendant arrangements that are not set for a shorter term shall expire on March 31 at the end of the registration year. If required, reapplication for second birth attendant approval must be made to CMBC by March 1 in order to have continuous second attendant application coverage. Applications received after March 1 may result in a gap in approved second attendant coverage as of April 1.
7. Once the proposed second birth attendant is approved, the midwife or midwives applying or reapplying will be notified. The approved second birth attendant will not receive notification of approval from CMBC directly.

8. The midwife or midwives must orient the approved second birth attendant to the duties as described in this policy and provide the second birth attendant with feedback and evaluation as appropriate.
9. The midwife or midwives are responsible for ensuring that the second birth attendant is in good standing with their regulatory body throughout the period that the midwife or midwives call upon them to provide second attendant support at births and for keeping copies verifying required training on file.