

FRAMEWORK FOR MIDWIFE CERTIFICATION IN HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVE THERAPY

Midwives in British Columbia provide primary care on their own responsibility to clients throughout the perinatal period, including the provision of contraceptive services for clients during the 3 months following a birth. The College of Midwives of BC (CMBC)'s *Competencies for Registered Midwives* states that midwives must have knowledge of methods of birth control and family planning and the ability to counsel clients in the choice and use of contraceptive methods.

Under Schedule B to the *Midwives Regulation*, midwives with specialized training and CMBC certification in prescriptive contraceptive therapeutics may prescribe contraceptives. Specialized practice certification in this competency area may be obtained through a course or program established or approved under the authority set out in the *Bylaws for the College of Midwives of BC* that meets the requirements set out in this framework.

Limitations – A midwife with specialized practice certification in this competency area may only prescribe contraceptive agents to a client in the three months following birth.

Certification

The certification process must be carried out by a recognized midwifery, medical, registered nurse or nurse-practitioner education program approved by the CMBC. Currently CMBC recognizes British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) course NSPN 7720 – Contraceptive Management in Reproductive Health.

The midwife must submit proof of course completion to CMBC before certification is granted. Where competence in this area of specialized practice has been acquired in a jurisdiction outside of British Columbia, the registrant must submit an *Application for Specialized Practice Certification Equivalency Assessment* to CMBC for assessment of equivalency in meeting the requirements outlined in this framework. Should a registrant wish to apply for equivalency assessment, they may request the appropriate form from CMBC. Specialized practice certification must be received by the registrant prior to independent practice in this competency area.

The provision of appropriate contraceptive services requires adequate training of care providers including the use of decision-making tools in the areas of contraception and sexual health (SOGC 2015).

Training for Specialized Practice Certification must include:

Demonstration of theoretical and practical knowledge of prescribing contraceptives including:

- 1) the knowledge necessary for the safe assessment, prescription, and management of intrauterine contraception, systemic contraceptives, combined hormonal contraceptives, and progestin-only contraceptives as set out in CMBC's *Standards, Limits and Conditions for Prescribing, Ordering and Administering Contraceptives*
- 2) knowledge of indications and contraindications, the pharmacological mechanisms of action and potential side effects of intrauterine contraception; oral contraceptives; transdermal contraceptives, injectable contraceptives; intravaginal contraceptives;
- 3) the ability to carry out a comprehensive sexual health assessment that includes cultural considerations, including a focus on the socio-economic determinants of health;
- 4) the ability to determine and prescribe the appropriate contraceptive option(s) for each individual client as indicated;
- 5) the ability to provide the client with proper information and instruction for use and appropriate cautions regarding risks, side effects and when to see a health care provider for follow-up; and
- 6) the ability to recognize a contraceptive medication's adverse effects, including knowledge of when medication may need to be discontinued or substituted, and signs and symptoms requiring consultation with or referral to a medical practitioner.

Demonstration of Appropriate Skills in Prescribing Hormonal Contraceptives

A midwife's knowledge and skills will be verified by completion of study materials and the successful passing of written and/or oral and simulated practical assessments.

Continuing Education

Evidence-based continuing education programs are a necessary component for updating practitioners' knowledge and skills (Taylor et al, 2010). Certified prescribers are expected to keep up to date with the latest evidence relevant to prescribing hormonal contraceptives.

References

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World Health Organization & Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. 2005, *Decision-making tool for family planning clients and providers* [online]. Sexual and Reproductive Health. Available from: http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/9241593229/en/

Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada. 2015. Canadian Contraception Consensus. *SOGC Clinical Practice Guideline No. 329*.

Taylor D, Levi A, Simmonds K. Reframing unintended pregnancy prevention: a public health model. *Contraception*. 2010;82:363–366