



Midwifery Council of New Brunswick

**Conseil de l'Ordre des sages-femmes
du Nouveau-Brunswick**

Policy: Informed Choice

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the concept and process of informed choice as it pertains to midwifery practice.

Definition

Informed choice is an interactive information exchange between a midwife and her client that involves the promotion of shared responsibility between the midwife and her client, and supports client centred decision-making.

Standard

Informed choice is a fundamental principle of midwifery care in New Brunswick. Informed choice should refer to relevant research evidence, community standards and practices and available resources. This policy refers to Standard 5 of the Standards of Midwifery Practice of the Midwifery Council of New Brunswick

Midwives recognize the client as the primary decision-maker and shall facilitate the ongoing exchange of current knowledge including sharing what is known and unknown about procedures, tests and medications by:

- Fostering a relationship of trust and respect between midwife and client,
- Providing relevant information in a non-authoritarian and collaborative manner,
- Considering the 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,
- Encouraging the client to actively seek information and to ask questions throughout the process of decision-making,
- Supporting the client's decisions.

Midwives are required to provide clients with the following information, at the onset of care and throughout the course of care as part of the informed choice process:

Midwife and Practice Information:

- Midwifery education and experience of the midwives in the practice,
- Midwifery model of care including scope of practice, philosophy of care, informed choice, collaborative care, and choice of birth setting,
- Standards of practice and protocols, including consultation and transfer of care, supportive care, and second attendant arrangements if applicable,
- Contact information including, change of appointment procedure and when to call the midwife for antepartum, intrapartum and postpartum matters,



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- Procedures and contact information in emergency situations,
- Role and responsibilities of the client,
- Confidentiality and access to client records,
- Any learner, student or supervised practice arrangements.

Clinical care information:

- A description of the test or procedure and how it may affect the client or her baby,
- The potential benefits, risks, and any alternatives to procedures, tests and medications,
- What may happen if the test or procedure is not done,
- Relevant information regarding midwifery scope of practice and MCNB standards of care,
- Relevant community standards and practices,
- Relevant best practice evidence, including any clear deficiency of clear research evidence,
- Identification of the midwife's bias, if significant.

Documentation:

Midwives must document all informed choice discussions, recommendations (if any) and the client's decision regarding her care. Midwives recognize and respect that clients will sometimes make choices for themselves and their families that:

- differ from their midwife's recommendation,
- are outside the scope of midwifery practice,
- are outside of MCNB standards and/or community standards,
- are challenging to the midwife/client relationship.

In such circumstances more extensive documentation, including dates, times and full details of the explanations provided to the client and any ensuing discussions should be entered in the client record. If the midwife determines that the choice of the client would put the client and/or her baby at risk, the procedure outlined in the Policy "*When a Client Chooses Care Outside of Midwifery Standards of Practice*" should be followed.

Emergency Situations

Any obstetrical or neonatal emergency that is reasonably anticipated should be discussed with the client in advance. In the event of an unforeseen obstetrical or neonatal emergency, the midwife shall make every effort to involve the client in decision-making when appropriate. When this cannot be achieved, the midwife should keep the client as informed and involved as possible. As soon as possible following the emergency event, a



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full discussion of the care provided shall take place with the client and shall be noted in the record.

Supporting Documents:

College of Midwives of Ontario - Informed Choice

College of Midwives of Ontario - When a Client Chooses Care Outside of Midwifery Standards of Practice.

College of Midwives of British Columbia - Policy on Informed Choice