



Midwifery Council of New Brunswick

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

Policy: Second Attendants

The Midwifery Model of Care and Standards of Practice of the New Brunswick Midwifery Council require that a registered midwife and a second attendant, trained and currently certified in neonatal resuscitation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation attend each birth. This requirement is in keeping with the recognition that the safest care can be provided when there are two qualified persons present at each birth

A second attendant is a skilled person whose role is to provide assistance to the midwife during birth and immediately thereafter. A second attendant is someone (other than a New Brunswick registered midwife) who is approved by the Midwifery Council of New Brunswick to assist at midwife attended births. Any second attendant approved by the Midwifery Council of New Brunswick will possess the knowledge, skills and judgment necessary to assist in labour and birth, including common obstetrical emergencies. The presence of a second attendant does not preclude the attendance of other support persons, e.g., doula, labour companion.

The role of the Midwifery Council of New Brunswick is to regulate midwives under the *Midwifery Act*. This legislative authority does not extend to second attendants who are not registered midwives.

When a midwife works with a second birth attendant who is not a currently practising registered midwife, the midwife is responsible for ensuring that care provided is safe and in accordance with the *Midwifery Act* and New Brunswick Model of Midwifery Practice. When midwives work together this responsibility is shared. The midwife may not delegate restricted activities to a second birth attendant who is not otherwise legally authorized under their own profession's regulation to perform those activities.

A second birth attendant who is not a currently practicing registered midwife or a licensed physician may not take primary care responsibility for a client in active labour.

Qualifications

A second attendant must:

1. Be a regulated health care professional* from one of the following professions:
 - Licensed Physician
 - Registered Nurse
 - Nurse Practitioner
 - Non-practising registered midwife

- Paramedic
- Respiratory Therapist
- Another appropriately trained professional (e.g. senior midwifery student) as per approval of the Council.

*When a second attendant is a member of a regulated health profession they remain responsible to their regulating body for the care they provide. It is the second attendant's responsibility to contact their regulating body regarding any restrictions that may prevent them providing second attendant support to a midwife. As well, the health professional must ensure that their liability insurance would cover them while providing care as a second attendant.

2. Have the following current certifications:

Neonatal Resuscitation (NRP) - renewal annually

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation for healthcare providers – renewal in compliance with the current professional and community health care standards

3. Have attended the “Second Attendant Home Birth Training” – refresh every 3 years

4. Be approved by Council.

Midwife Responsibilities when working with a Second Attendant

1. The midwife is the most responsible provider (MRP) for the care provided throughout the labour, birth and immediate postpartum period;
2. The midwife will provide orientation to the role, duties and expectations of a second attendant, within the midwife's practice;
3. The midwife will only work with second attendants who have been approved by the Council.
4. The midwife will ensure any arrangements for a second attendant are included in any informed choice discussions and/or documents pertaining to a planned home birth.
5. The midwife will be physically present and aware when the second attendant is providing care.