

## STANDARD FOR USE OF A SECOND ATTENDANT

### Preamble

The role of the College of Midwives is to regulate midwives under *The Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act*. This legislative authority does not extend to second attendants who are not registered midwives. The purpose of this standard is to provide direction to midwives who use second attendants who are not midwives.

### Definition of a second attendant

A second attendant is a skilled person whose role is to provide assistance to the midwife during birth and immediately thereafter. The second attendant is trained to deal with obstetrical and neonatal emergencies. The presence of a second attendant does not preclude the attendance of other support persons, e.g., doula, labour companion.

*The Midwifery Model of Practice in Manitoba* requires that a midwife and a second attendant trained and currently certified in CPR and neonatal resuscitation attend each birth. The role of the second attendant is to assist the midwife.

The following general principles apply:

1. The midwife is responsible for primary care throughout the full course of care:
2. The midwife must ensure that the care provided is in accordance with the *Midwifery and Consequential Amendments Act*, and the standards of the College of Midwives of Manitoba:
3. The midwife must ensure that adequate liability coverage is in place for any second attendant who is assisting the midwife;
4. If a second attendant is a member of a regulated health profession\* she remains responsible to her regulating body for the care she provides. It would be her responsibility to contact her regulating body regarding any restrictions on her providing second attendant support to a midwife. As well, the health professional should ensure that her liability insurance would cover her in her role as a second attendant.
5. If a second attendant is not a member of a regulated health profession\*\* the midwife is responsible for ensuring that the care provided by the second attendant meets the guidelines as written in this *Standard for use of a Second Attendant*.

Many factors influence who will be the second attendant at a birth. Some of these will be dictated by the geographic area, the availability of appropriate professionals and the midwife and woman's preferences. Ideally the second attendant will be known to the woman.

~~\* In most circumstances a second attendant will be a regulated health professional such as another midwife, a senior midwifery student, an obstetrical nurse, a physician etc.~~

\*\* In a less usual situation a person who is not a member of any regulated health profession may serve as a second attendant.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRIMARY MIDWIFE/MIDWIFERY PRACTICE**

It is the responsibility of the primary midwife/midwifery practice to ensure that the second attendant is competent to deal with obstetrical and neonatal emergencies. More specifically:

1. The second attendant is competent and currently certified in the following
  - a) Neonatal resuscitation (NRP), and
  - b) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
2. The second attendant is knowledgeable and competent in the following:
  - a) Assessment of vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respirations, fetal heart tones);
  - b) Postpartum assessment of uterine tone and position, blood loss and bladder;
  - c) Universal precautions;
  - d) Basic knowledge of labour and birth;
  - e) Basic knowledge of instruments, supplies, drugs and herbs used by midwives;
  - f) Appropriate record keeping;
  - g) Knowledge and understanding of midwifery in Manitoba and the midwife's practice protocols; and
  - h) Skilled in observation and assessment of the newborn

If the second attendant has additional skills, e.g., starting intravenous infusions, other than the above she would be authorized to perform them under the direction of the midwife or under her own regulated health profession legislation.

3. The arrangements for the second attendant are included in the *informed choice document*, which is provided to her clients.
4. The midwife/midwifery practice informs the College in writing of current arrangements for the use of any second attendants other than those who are employed by the hospital and will be providing second attendant coverage as part of their regular duties. Required documents include evidence of current certification in CPR and neonatal resuscitation, references, and documentation of her competency in the skills and knowledge required of a second attendant.
5. The midwife/midwifery practice regularly evaluates the second attendant, and that this process is documented.

## **ROLES AND DUTIES OF A SECOND ATTENDANT**

~~Sole attendance with a woman in established labour is only appropriate when the second attendant is a registered midwife, licensed physician, or registered nurse, who regularly provides care during the intrapartum and early postpartum periods.~~ The second attendant is to be present for the second stage of labour, the birth, and the immediate postpartum period as required. The duties of the second attendant may include the following:

#### First stage of labour

- Is present at the discretion of the primary midwife

#### Second stage of labour

- Provides assistance to the midwife.
- Provides support to the *woman*
- Checks layout of supplies to ensure accessibility of drugs. Instruments and functioning of equipment
- Auscultates fetal heart rate
- Documents in the health care record

#### Birth

- Provides assistance to the midwife
- Ensures warmth and safety of the newborn
- Checks, reports and records the condition of the newborn.
- Assesses Apgar scores
- Administers medications/herbs as directed by the midwife

#### Postpartum

- Provides assistance to the midwife
- Assists the midwife during suturing, if required.
- Provides support and assistance to the woman
- Checks maternal blood pressure, pulse, fundus, lochia and bladder.
- Helps clean up after birth

#### Emergencies

- Phones Emergency Medical Services.
- Phones the receiving hospital.
- Assist midwife in setting up or establishes intravenous/drug therapy.
- Checks maternal blood pressure and pulse
- Assists with CPR and neonatal resuscitation
- Assists in preparation for transport
- Administers medications/herbs as directed by the midwife

**The second attendant's role in emergencies such as precipitate delivery, haemorrhage, infant resuscitation, meconium-stained amniotic fluid and shoulder dystocia is to be clearly agreed upon ahead of time and routinely reviewed.**

The midwife and the second attendant will develop and adhere to a written agreement outlining roles and responsibilities and mechanisms for maintaining quality assurance. A copy of this ~~agreement will be available to the College upon request.~~

Where second attendants are used in hospital, the College recommends that midwifery practices work with these hospitals to develop clear guidelines for second attendants that support the midwifery model of practice. As well, these hospital based second attendants, who will usually be nurses, require an orientation to working with midwives. This orientation will be jointly developed and delivered by members of the College of Midwives of Manitoba and the second attendant's employer.