

## **DEFINITION /SCOPE OF PRACTICE OF THE MIDWIFE**

“Midwife” means “with woman”. In Manitoba the Midwifery Act states that a midwife is a person registered as a midwife under the Act. She must be able to give necessary care and advice to women during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to conduct births on her own responsibility, and to care for the infant and the mother. This care recognizes and includes the physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects of pregnancy and birth and includes preventative measures, the detection of abnormal conditions in the mother and child, accessing medical assistance when necessary and taking emergency measures in the absence of additional medical help. The midwife has a mechanism for consultation, referral, continued involvement and collaboration.

The midwife spends an average of 45 hours with each woman she serves. Approximately half of this time is spent during pregnancy and the post-birth period, and half during labour and birth. A full-time midwife may attend 30-40 women per year, depending on the needs of the women and the community. The midwife has an important task in health promotion, counselling and education, not only for the woman but also for the family and the community. Midwifery practice should involve antenatal education and preparation for parenthood, and extend to certain areas of gynaecology, family planning and child care.

Midwives practise in a variety of settings including hospitals, clinics, health units, community health centres, birth centres and homes.