

Policy Statement on Midwifery

This policy statement was developed by the Executive of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada in collaboration with the Associate Midwife Advisory Committee and approved by the Council of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) supports the establishment of midwifery in Canada as a regulated, publicly funded health care profession with access to hospital privileges.

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EDUCATION

The SOGC proposes that midwifery education programs, leading to a diploma or degree, be integrated with colleges or universities across Canada. The SOGC continues its support of ongoing evaluation and accreditation of midwifery programs. The SOGC extends membership to registered midwives and midwifery students and offers them access to ongoing education.

PRACTICE SETTING

The SOGC recognizes and stresses the importance of choice for women and their families in the birthing process. The SOGC recognizes that women want to choose the setting in which they will give birth. All women should receive information about the risks and benefits of their chosen place for giving birth and should understand any identified limitation of care at their planned birth setting. The SOGC endorses evidence-based practice and encourages ongoing research into the safety of birth settings.

INTEGRATION OF MIDWIFERY INTO HEALTH SERVICES TEAMS

The SOGC believes midwives should be integrated members of the maternity care team in the community and the hospital. Hospitals or regional health authorities responsible for maternal newborn care should continue to develop strategies to effect this integration, in consultation with midwives and other interested parties.

Such strategies should be clearly defined and should include the following:

1. Mechanisms to provide access for midwives to health care resources and facilities such as laboratory tests, ultrasound results, and prescription medications.
2. Development of policies and procedures to ensure smooth integration of patient care between midwives and other obstetrical care providers.
3. Appropriate remuneration of consultation requests from midwives. Encouragement of/support for funding models that support collaborative practice.
4. Continuous review of maternal and perinatal outcomes as part of ongoing quality assurance programs.
5. Inclusion of midwives in committees concerned with maternal and newborn issues.
6. Development of policies concerned with complaints and performance issues.
7. Mechanisms for liaison between professional associations and regulating bodies of midwifery and other professional and regulatory bodies.
8. Harmonization of obstetrical standards for care for all health professionals.
9. Provision of appropriate malpractice coverage for midwives.
10. Support for a process of credentialing midwifery within the hospital system and providing appropriate access to hospital privileges.

CONCLUSION

The SOGC is confident that the integration of midwifery into the obstetrical health care team is fostering excellence in maternity care for women living in Canada and their families, which is the goal of our organization. This goal is being realized with the development and maintenance of excellent educational standards and of mechanisms that bring midwifery into the existing health care structure for mothers and babies. The SOGC promotes the building of interprofessional relationships between midwives and other obstetrical care providers in the interests of providing excellent health care for women and their babies.

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