

ETHICS STANDARD

Midwives: Requests for Care Outside Standards

Introduction

Midwives in British Columbia respect the rights of each client to make informed choices about their care that the client determines is in their own best interest. In some cases, a client will request care considered outside standards when making informed choices. This practice standard sets out the requirements of a midwife in the case that such a request for care outside standards is made.

Standards

1. Should a client request care outside standards, the midwife must:
 - a. Engage the client in an informed choice discussion¹ as related to their request for care outside standards, with the understanding that this discussion may need to take place over a series of encounters,
 - b. Initiate discussion, consultation or transfer of care if indicated,
 - c. Consider their own ability to safely and reasonably offer the care that has been requested,
 - d. Determine whether providing care as requested would place them or their client at an unacceptable level of risk, and
 - e. Ensure contemporaneous documentation in the medical record.
2. If the midwife is unable to safely or reasonably provide the care requested, and/or has determined that providing the care requested creates an unacceptable level of risk, they must then take the following additional steps:
 - a. Respectfully inform the client of their limited ability/inability to safely and/or reasonably provide the care requested and/or the risk(s) associated with their request,
 - b. Offer a consultation with another midwife, physician or nurse practitioner for a second opinion,
 - c. Provide the client with an opportunity to respond and ask any outstanding questions,
 - d. Confirm the client's decision, and
 - e. Ensure contemporaneous documentation in the medical record.

¹ Refer to the practice standard *Midwives: Informed Choice*.

3. If a client requests care outside of standards during an urgent or emergency situation, the midwife must:
 - a. Continue to provide the best care possible, and
 - b. Notify the hospital, request consultation if required, and if appropriate, call additional midwives and/or an ambulance.

Revision history

Version #	Approved by board	Bylaw in-force	Description
1.0	March 1, 2026	April 1, 2026	Initial publication

Effective April 1, 2026, this ethics standard, and any amendments to it, is made a bylaw under the authority of the *Health Professions and Occupations Act, B.C.*

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