

MIDWIFERY

This Policy Statement was developed by the Executive Committee of The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and approved by its Council.

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

EDUCATION

The SOGC proposes that midwifery education programs, leading to a diploma or degree, be undertaken and integrated with colleges or universities across Canada. The SOGC continues its support of ongoing evaluation and accreditation of midwifery programs. The SOGC will extend membership to registered midwives and offer them access to ongoing educational experiences.

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 will continue 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 safe environment of all birth settings.

INTEGRATION OF MIDWIFERY INTO HEALTH SERVICES TEAMS

The SOGC believes midwives should be integrated members of the maternity care team in their community and 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 include:

1. Mechanisms to provide access to health-care resources and facilities such as laboratory tests, ultrasound, 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.
4. Integration of outcome results (maternal and perinatal) into existing quality assurance programs and outcome statistics.
5. Membership of midwives on 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. Development of midwifery standards of care.
9. Provision of appropriate malpractice coverage for midwives.

CONCLUSION

The SOGC is confident that the integration of midwifery into the obstetrical health-care team is fostering excellence in maternity care for Canadian women 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.

This policy statement replaces Policy Statement No. 66 dated September 1997.

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Key Words

Midwifery, birthing, maternity care team