

Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) Standards for Practice as a Certified Professional Midwife

The National Association of Certified Professional Midwives (NACPM) affirms that CPMs practice in accordance with the standards detailed below. Certified Professional Midwives (CPM) are accountable to the clients they serve, to themselves, and to the profession of community midwifery. The CPM Standards of Practice provide a tool for measuring actual scope of practice and appropriate usage of the body of knowledge of midwifery.

Standard One: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CLIENTS

Key Responsibilities and Principles

These principles underscore the commitment of Certified Professional Midwives to providing comprehensive, client-centered care.

- **Personalized Care:** Delivering experienced care, respect, counsel, and support tailored to each client.
- **Transparency:** Openly sharing CPM philosophy, professional standards, personal scope of practice, expertise, and regulatory or legal limitations.
- **Art and Science:** Recognizing that CPM care is a synthesis of knowledge, skills, intuition, and clinical judgment.
- **Client Autonomy:** Recognizing clients' responsibility for their own health and well-being.
- **Informed Decision Making:** Respecting and accepting a clients' right to make informed decisions about their reproductive healthcare, pregnancy, and birthing experience.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Negotiating caregiver roles with clients, defining mutual and individual responsibilities in decision-making.
- **Clear Financial Communication:** Providing a detailed outline of service fees and refund policies.
- **Open Communication:** Engaging in open, interactive communication with clients and their support networks, respecting client preferences.
- **Holistic Support:** Assessing holistic aspects of health including social determinants of health, psychological, physical, emotional, spiritual, and cultural needs of each client.
- **Value Neutrality:** Avoiding the imposition of personal values on clients.
- **Client Feedback:** Actively soliciting and respecting clients' perspectives on their health.
- **Respecting Relationships:** Valuing the significance of others in the client's life.

Standard Two:

GROUNDING CARE IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF NORMAL PHYSIOLOGIC BIRTH

Core Beliefs Guiding Pregnancy and Birth Practice

These principles ground Certified Professional Midwifery in a shared philosophy that honors birth, safeguards the birthing dyad, and respects normal physiological birth.

- **Protecting the Birthing Dyad:** Safeguarding the inseparable and interdependent relationship between the client and infant.
- **Respecting Pregnancy and Birth:** Honoring the mystery, sanctity, and growth potential inherent in pregnancy and birth experiences.
- **Birth as a Pivotal Event:** Understanding birth as a critical life event and aiming to support, empower, and preserve the natural process of birth for the client, infant, and family.
- **Embodied Reproductive Experience:** Respecting the biological aspects of pregnancy and birth as integral to human sexuality.

Standard Three: PROVIDING INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

Optimizing Well-Being and Minimizing Risk

These points encapsulate the dedication of Certified Professional Midwives to holistic, evidence-based, and collaborative care.

- **Self-Care:** Encouraging clients to maintain personal health and well-being to optimize caregiving capabilities.
- **Natural Process Advocacy:** Supporting the natural progression of reproductive health and aging.
- **Continuous Care:** Providing consistent care to maintain the integrity of each client's care experience.
- **Comprehensive Skills:** Bringing a wide range of skills and services to each client's care.
- **Minimizing Interventions:** Striving to reduce technological interventions, basing recommendations on empirical research and ensuring benefits outweigh risks.
- **Emergency Competency:** Demonstrating skill in handling emergencies and prioritizing life-threatening situations.
- **Medical Consultation Awareness:** Acknowledging the occasional need for medical consultation or collaboration for the client or infant.
- **Collaborative Network:** Recognizing that optimal reproductive healthcare occurs within a network of collaborative care providers for services beyond the Certified Professional Midwifery scope including professional referrals to specialized healthcare professionals when care exceeds the CPM's scope or personal expertise.
- **Valuing Collaborative Expertise:** Appreciating the expertise of collaborative care providers and ensuring timely transfer of care when necessary.



Standard Four: SUPPORTING CLIENT CARE AUTONOMY

Communication and Decision-Making

These guidelines reflect the commitment of Certified Professional Midwives to effective communication, informed decision-making, and responsible care management.

- **Clear Communication:** Sharing information in language that is understandable to the client.
- **Information Support:** Assisting the client in accessing current, accurate, and diverse sources for informed decision-making.
- **Exploring Options:** Reviewing options with the client and addressing all questions and concerns.
- **Respect for Choices:** Respecting clients' right to informed choice for treatments or procedures and documenting their choices.
- **Collaborative Care Planning:** Developing and documenting the care plan in partnership with the client.
- **Professional Judgment:** Clearly stating and documenting any professional judgment conflicts with the client's decisions or plans.
- **Scope of Practice:** Clearly stating and documenting when a client's choices fall outside the CPMs professional or legal scope of practice and/or personal expertise.
- **Facilitating Referrals:** Facilitating referrals and record transfers to other professionals if the care requested is deemed unsafe or outside the CPM's expertise.
- **Emergency Transfers:** Safeguarding the right to transfer care in critical situations, using expert judgment in situations that are no longer considered low-risk.
- **Emergency Support:** Staying with the client during emergency transports until care is officially transferred.

Standard Five: CONCLUSION OF CARE

Compassionate Ending of the Partnership

These points highlight the commitment of Certified Professional Midwives to comprehensive postnatal care and sustained client support.

- **Partnership Duration:** Maintaining the midwifery relationship through open and ongoing communication that prioritizes safety, clarity, and mutual respect until either the client or the CPM elects to end the partnership.
- **Client Education:** Ensuring clients are educated on self-care and infant care before concluding CPM care, including their chosen feeding method.
- **Reflection:** Providing opportunities for clients to reflect on and discuss their midwifery experiences and the CPMs care.
- **Community Support Referrals:** Informing clients and their support network about available community resources and making appropriate referrals.



Standard Six: COMPREHENSIVE DOCUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

Record-Keeping and Confidentiality

These guidelines underscore the importance of thorough, confidential, and client-centered record-keeping in Certified Professional Midwifery practice.

- **Record Maintenance:** Maintaining legible records for each client from the first contact through the entire caregiving relationship.
- **Authentication and Integrity:** Ensuring that all entries are initialed/signed, accurately documented, dated, and reflect the integrity of the original record, protecting against unauthorized alterations or errors.
- **Privacy and Confidentiality Protections:** Ensuring that all client information, including medical and midwifery records, is protected from unauthorized access, use, or disclosure, without client permission, except when required by law.
- **Record Updates:** Regularly reviewing and updating records at each professional interaction with the client.
- **Individualized Documentation:** Documenting the unique aspects of each client's care in assessments and records.
- **Clinical Assessment Basis:** Using clinical assessments as the foundation for ongoing CPM care.
- **Detailed Documentation:** Clearly documenting objective findings, decisions made, and professional actions taken.
- **Informed Choice Documentation:** Recording the client's decisions regarding care choices, including provided information and the client's informed choice.
- **Record Accessibility:** Ensuring records and relevant information are always accessible to the client and other authorized individuals, with the client's knowledge and consent.
- **Client Access and Rights:** Ensuring clients have the right to access their records, request corrections, and receive copies of their information in a timely and secure manner.
- **Legal Document Filing:** Appropriately filing and handling legal documents related to care.
- **Secure Handling of Electronic Records:** Implementing appropriate safeguards to protect electronic records, including encryption, secure storage, and restricted access to authorized personnel.
- **Breach Response and Notification:** Establishing protocols for responding to potential breaches of client information, including notifying affected individuals and taking corrective action to prevent future occurrences.
- **Informed Authorization for Disclosure:** Requiring client authorization before sharing information with third parties, except when disclosure is necessary for care, payment, or healthcare operations, or as required by law.
- **Ongoing Staff Training and Compliance:** Providing regular training to staff and students on confidentiality, privacy standards, and proper record-keeping practices to maintain compliance with applicable regulations.
- **Retention and Secure Disposal:** Retaining records for the required period and ensuring secure and appropriate disposal of records when retention is no longer necessary.



Standard Seven: PROVIDING EVIDENCE-BASED CARE

Practice Evaluation and Improvement

These points emphasize the importance of continuous learning, client engagement, and research in advancing and refining the practice of Certified Professional Midwives.

- **Advocating Out-of-Hospital Birth:** Understanding research that supports the safety and rationality of community birth settings for healthy individuals and the empowerment it offers clients.
- **Research Engagement:** Identifying areas for research, conducting or collaborating in studies, and sharing findings.
- **Research Integration:** Incorporating relevant research findings into CPM practice.
- **Historical Knowledge:** Understanding the history of midwifery in the United States.
- **Policy Awareness:** Acknowledging the impact of social policies on client, infant, and family health and influencing such policies as appropriate.

Standard Eight: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Excellence Through Reflection, Evaluation, and Responsiveness

These principles promote a culture of accountability, responsiveness, and continuous quality improvement in Certified Professional Midwifery care.

- **Client Feedback:** Involving clients continuously in evaluating their practice and using feedback for improvement.
- **Data Utilization:** Collecting practice statistics and using this data to enhance practice quality.
- **Complaints and Review Process:** Informing each client about complaint mechanisms and review processes, including NARM's peer review and grievance procedures.
- **Continual Learning:** Participating in ongoing midwifery education and peer review to maintain and improve skills.



Standard Nine: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CREDENTIALLED MIDWIFE

Sustaining the Capacity to Practice and Grow

These principles support the long-term sustainability of Certified Professional Midwives, contributing to workforce retention, professional well-being, and the continued strength of the credential.

- **Tending to Holistic Self:** Committing to the physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual aspects of self as part of professional sustainability.
- **Self-Care:** Prioritizing personal health and well-being as essential to the ability to provide safe, responsive, and consistent care.
- **Mental Health:** Attending to mental and emotional wellness as part of the ongoing capacity to care for others.
- **Caring for Support Systems:** Recognizing and nurturing the relationships and structures that sustain the midwife in practice, including family, colleagues, and community.
- **Peer Support and Feedback:** Engaging in peer relationships that offer accountability, mentorship, and mutual support for growth and quality improvement.
- **Personalized Scope:** Practicing within one's individual scope of expertise, training, and legal authority, while seeking growth through continued education and reflection.
- **Boundary Setting:** Establishing and maintaining professional boundaries to prevent burnout and foster long-term engagement in midwifery work.
- **Entrepreneurship and Leadership:** Cultivating business, administrative, and leadership skills to support the growth of sustainable, community-rooted CPM practices.
- **Financial Literacy:** Developing financial awareness and skills to support the sustainability of independent practice and personal economic well-being.



Standard Ten: WORKING IN PRECEPTORSHIP WITH STUDENTS

Upholding Educational Integrity and Mentorship in Clinical Training

These principles affirm the vital role Certified Professional Midwives play in cultivating the next generation of midwives through ethical, skilled, and reflective preceptorship.

- **Contractual Clarity:** Developing and maintaining clear, signed preceptor/student agreements that outline expectations, responsibilities, and scope of learning.
- **Ethical Responsibility:** Modeling legal and ethical practices in alignment with FERPA, HIPAA, copyright law, and anti-harassment protections.
- **Teaching Foundations:** Applying principles of adult teaching and learning across clinical, virtual, and classroom settings, while supporting diverse learning styles.
- **Cultural Humility in Professional Practice:** Demonstrating and cultivating inclusivity, anti-racism, an awareness of systemic inequities, and the guiding principles of cultural humility including reflection, respect, regard, relevance, and resilience in midwifery education and practice.
- **Curriculum Development:** Creating or adapting learning materials, and utilizing appropriate educational technologies to support student engagement and comprehension.
- **Assessment and Feedback:** Using competency-based educational principles and best practices in student assessment to provide timely, constructive feedback and support growth.
- **Mentorship and Modeling:** Embodying the mission, values, and educational philosophy of midwifery programs while serving as a mentor, role model, and clinical guide.
- **Student Safety and Boundaries:** Setting clear policies to ensure respectful, inclusive, and safe learning environments, with appropriate boundaries and protections.
- **Collaborative Supervision:** Delegating and supervising tasks appropriately based on the student's level of training, program guidelines, and client safety.
- **Ongoing Reflection:** Engaging in regular self-evaluation, peer feedback, and refinement of preceptor practice to maintain high standards in teaching and supervision.
- **Resource Evaluation:** Periodically reviewing and updating educational materials and student resources to ensure quality, relevance, and accessibility.
- **Provision of Rest:** Honoring the physical, emotional, and cognitive demands of both clinical education and practice by supporting sustainable schedules that promote intentional rest and recovery for both students and preceptors.



Citations

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