The Midwifery Advisory Committee

Who is it?

What does it do?

The Washington State Legislature created the committee to advise and make recommendations to the secretary of health on issues including, but not limited to, continuing education, mandatory re-examination, and peer review. The committee consists of seven members and includes:

- One physician who is a practicing obstetrician
- One practicing physician
- One certified nurse midwife
- Three licensed midwives
- One public member

The secretary of health appoints committee members, who may not serve more than five consecutive years.

For more information about licensed midwives practicing in your area, contact:
Washington State Department of Health
www.doh.wa.gov
or call
360-236-4700

How can I check my healthcare provider's credential?

You may check the credential status of any healthcare provider licensed in Washington online. See our webpage at http://www.doh.wa.gov/hsqa/ to find our Provider Credential Search function.

You may also contact our Customer Service Office by calling 360-236-4700 to verify the status of a healthcare provider's credential and to find out if disciplinary action has been taken. The address for written inquiries is:

Department of Health
Customer Service Office
P.O. Box 47865
Olympia, WA 98504

Washington State Department of Health

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WHAT IS A LICENSED MIDWIFE?

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What is a Licensed Midwife?

The Midwife

A midwife licensed in Washington State specializes in the care of low-risk childbearing women and their newborn babies. Midwives combine traditional skills with medical techniques to safeguard normal childbirth, and to ensure prompt diagnosis and referral of complications when needed. Midwives value shared decision making and encourage parents to take an active role in the birth experience. Midwives maintain liaisons with physicians and other health care providers to ensure childbearing women have access to current standard screenings, diagnostic procedures, and other methods that may be needed or helpful throughout the childbearing year.

Midwifery in Washington

Washington State recognizes two separate entry paths for professional midwives:

Licensed midwives (LM)
Licensed midwives follow the direct-entry model of midwifery training, which includes the nursing care necessary for women and infants within the program. This direct-entry model is used successfully in many states of the US.

Certified nurse-midwives (CNM)
Certified nurse-midwives are educated in the two disciplines of nursing and midwifery. Their certification is by the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

What education and training are required to be a Licensed Midwife in Washington?

The basic curriculum shall be at least three academic years, consist of both didactic and clinical instruction, and meet the educational standards of the school and chapter 18.50 RCW.

Students must care for a minimum of 50 women in each of the prenatal, intrapartum and early postpartum periods. A candidate for licensure must observe an additional 50 women in the intrapartum period to qualify for licensure.

In addition, applicants must complete seven hours of HIV/AIDS training before licensure.

Applicants must have successfully passed the national and state midwifery licensure examinations, as well as submit two letters of recommendation.

Washington State Department of Health DOH Pub 679-149

What Services may a Licensed Midwife Offer?

Licensed midwives are covered by almost all medical insurance companies in Washington State. This service may include:

- Complete prenatal care, including lab work and referral for ultrasound;
- Education, pregnancy and birth counseling, and infant care;
- Continuous support during labor;
- Delivery of the infant
- Newborn care for the first two weeks of life;
- Postpartum care of the mother, up to eight weeks:

Types of Midwifery Practices

A licensed midwife may practice independently or in a group with other midwives, physicians or health care providers. Licensed midwives may conduct deliveries in hospitals, birth centers or homes. They are licensed to perform all of the procedures that may be necessary during a normal pregnancy and birth, including administering approved medications, and all routine procedures for newborns.

If deviations from normal occur during pregnancy or delivery, midwives consult with qualified physicians and make appropriate referrals. In an emergency, they are trained and equipped to carry out life-saving measures. Licensed midwives are required to file a plan annually with the Department of Health for medical consultation, referral and emergency transport.

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