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Subject: **Informed Choice** Issued: **July 2008**
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GUIDELINE

Informed choice is a fundamental principle of midwifery care in Saskatchewan. Women have the right to receive information and be involved in the decision-making process throughout their midwifery care. The interactive process of informed choice involves the promotion of shared responsibility between the midwife and her client. Midwives encourage and give guidance to clients wishing to seek out resources to assist them in the decision-making process. It is the responsibility of the midwife to facilitate the ongoing exchange of current knowledge in a non-authoritarian and co-operative manner, including sharing what is known and unknown about procedures, tests and medications. Each midwife has the continuing responsibility to practice according to accepted guidelines of the profession and may decline to be involved in care that is outside of accepted practice guidelines.

The Saskatchewan College of Midwives requires that registered midwives provide each client with the following information at the onset of their care, ideally given in writing and followed up in discussion:

- education and experience in midwifery of the midwives in the practice;
- services provided, including: scope of practice, philosophy of care and choice of birth setting;
- contact information, including how the client can reach a midwife known to her;
- 24 hours a day¹, change of appointment procedure, off-call coverage arrangements, and back-up arrangements;
- second attendant arrangements, if applicable;
- standards of practice and protocols, including: continuity of care, consultation and transfer of care and supportive care;
- role and responsibilities of the client;
- confidentiality and access to client records;
- any student and/or supervised practice arrangements.

¹ Where a midwife is in solo practice and cannot make arrangements for on-call coverage by another midwife, she must inform her client of how to access an alternate primary caregiver when she is off-call. Ideally that alternate care provider would also be known to the woman.

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The Saskatchewan College of Midwives requires registered midwives to provide each client with the following information throughout the course of care:

- potential benefits and risks of, and alternatives to, procedures, tests and medications, including the risks of not having any particular test, procedure or medication;
- relevant research evidence;
- community standards and practices;
- opportunities to discuss information;
- care that is individualized and sensitive to changes in the woman's circumstances throughout pregnancy.