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Subject: **Second Attendant** Issued: **January 2009**
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PREAMBLE

The role of the Saskatchewan College of Midwives (SCM) is to protect the public by regulating midwives in the province of Saskatchewan. As such, the SCM has developed this document to guide midwives in the role and appropriate utilization of second attendants.

DEFINITIONS

- A second attendant is a person whose role is to provide assistance to the midwife during labour, birth and immediately thereafter.
- The second attendant possesses the competencies to properly assist the midwife in the delivery of safe and competent midwifery care.
- The second attendant always works under the direction and immediate, in person, supervision of the primary midwife. The second attendant may or may not be another regulated health professional (e.g. a midwife, physician, registered nurse, etc.). Regardless of whether or not the second attendant is a health care professional, he/she must possess the competencies necessary to assist the midwife during the labour, birth and immediate postpartum period.
- If the second attendant is a member of another regulated health profession she/he is also accountable to her/his regulatory authority.
- If the second attendant is a member of a regulated health profession, it is recommended that the individual contact her/his regulatory authority for advice regarding this role. There may be additional issues that need to be considered, e.g. additional liability insurance.
- The presence of a second attendant does not preclude the attendance of other support persons, i.e. doula or labour companion.

GUIDELINE

1. The midwife is the most responsible person (MRP) for the care provided throughout the labour, delivery and immediate postpartum period.
2. The midwife must ensure that the care provided is in accordance with *The Midwifery Act, 1999*, the Code of Ethics, standards of the Saskatchewan College of Midwives and any other relevant documents.

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The midwife must ensure that the second attendant is competent to assist the midwife during the labour, birth and the immediate postpartum period, and possesses the following competencies:

- a. Current certification in:
 - i) Neonatal resuscitation (NRP) (within the past year); and,
 - ii) Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) (within the past two years).
 - b. Knowledgeable and competent in the following:
 - i) Assessment of vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, temperature, respirations, fetal heart tones);
 - ii) Postpartum assessment of uterine tone and position, blood loss and bladder;
 - iii) Universal precautions;
 - iv) Basic knowledge of labour and birth;
 - v) Basic knowledge of instruments, supplies, drugs and herbs used by midwives;
 - vi) Appropriate documentation; and,
 - vii) Observation and assessment of the newborn.
 3. The midwife must ensure that adequate liability coverage is in place for the second attendant in order to provide appropriate compensation to client (s) in the event of legal action.
 4. The midwife will attempt to obtain a midwife as the second attendant at all out of hospital births. If another midwife is not available, the midwife may utilize any of the following as the second attendant as long as they possess the necessary competencies and certifications:
 - Registered nurse;
 - Physician;
 - Senior Midwifery Student (clerkship¹ or equivalent) in a program recognized by the SCM;
 - Paramedic
 - Non-Practising midwife member of SCM; or,
 - Another appropriately trained and competent person where none of the above attendants are available.
- Client preference may also influence the midwife's choice for the second attendant.*
5. The midwife must include arrangements for the second attendant in the *informed choice document* provided to clients.
 6. The midwife may not delegate tasks to a second attendant who is not otherwise legally authorized to perform them.
 7. The midwife and the second attendant will develop and adhere to a written agreement outlining roles and responsibilities and mechanisms for maintaining quality assurance. A copy of this agreement will be available to the College upon request. The midwife must review this agreement regularly.

¹ A student in the clerkship portion of her program of midwifery education is in the final year of her midwifery education. She has successfully completed certification in Emergency Skills and NRP and her program has assessed her to be competent to provide primary care under direct supervision.

Subject: Second Attendant**Specific Duties of Second Attendants**

Sole attendance with a woman in labour is not considered an appropriate responsibility for the second attendant who is not a midwife or licensed physician.

The second attendant is to be present for the second stage of labour, birth and the immediate postpartum period, as required. The duties of the second attendant may include the following (if within her/his scope of practice).

First stage of labour

- Is present at the discretion of the primary midwife.

Second stage of labour

- Provides assistance to the midwife.
- Provides support to the woman.
- Checks layout of supplies to ensure safe and appropriate accessibility of drugs, instruments (e.g. sharps out of reach of children) and functioning of equipment.
- Auscultates fetal heart rate.
- Documents in the health care record.

Birth

- Provides assistance to the midwife.
- Ensures warmth and safety of the newborn.
- Checks, reports and records the condition of the newborn.
- Assesses Apgar scores.
- Administers medications/herbs as directed by the midwife.

Postpartum

- Provides assistance to the midwife.
- Assists the midwife during suturing, if required.
- Provides support and assistance to the woman.
- Checks maternal blood pressure, pulse, fundus, lochia and bladder.
- Helps clean up after birth.

Emergencies

- Phones Emergency Medical Services.
- Phones the receiving hospital.
- Assists midwife in setting up or establish intravenous/drug therapy.
- Checks maternal blood pressure and pulse.
- Assists with CPR and/or neonatal resuscitation.
- Assists in preparation for transport.
- Administers medications/herbs as directed by the midwife.

The second attendant's role in emergencies such as: precipitate delivery, haemorrhage, infant resuscitation, and shoulder dystocia is to be clearly agreed upon by the midwife and second attendant prior to labour. The skills needed by the second attendant in such emergencies should be routinely practised to maintain competency.

Subject: **Second Attendant**

Declaration of Second Attendant Credential Check by Midwife

Second Attendant

Name: _____

Contact Information: _____

Professional Designation: _____

Practice Location (City): _____

I have received the following from the proposed Second Attendant:

- Copy of Valid Licence or Registration Card (if applicable)
- Copy of Valid CPR Certificate
- Copy of Valid NRP Certificate
- Criminal Record Check or Letter of Good Standing from the Regulatory Body

Please check the following:

- I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure my second attendant is knowledgeable and competent to fill the role of second attendant as outlined in the College Policy for Second Attendants.
- I agree to only ask my second attendant to provide care that is outlined in this policy.
- I understand that if my second attendant is a member of a regulated health profession, he or she can only legally perform additional clinical acts within the scope of his/her practice.
- I understand that I am fully responsible for all care provided to my clients by my second attendant and I agree that I will be present at all times that she is providing care to my midwifery clients.

Name of Midwife (printed)

Signature of Midwife

Date