



Te Tatau o te Whare Kahu  
midwifery council  
of new zealand

# **Midwifery Council of New Zealand Code of Conduct for the Midwifery Profession**

**Document for consultation**

**June 2010**

# Code of Conduct for the Midwifery Profession

## Purpose of this document

- To make explicit the minimum expectations of each professional midwife with regard to conduct as they engage in their professional activities.
- To make explicit the code of professional behaviour to members of the public, employers and other health professionals.

This Code should be read in conjunction with The Competencies for Entry to the Register of Midwives which may be found at: [www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz/main/Competencies/](http://www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz/main/Competencies/) and The Code of Ethics and Standards for Midwifery Practice which are set out in the Midwives Handbook for Practice (2008) published by the New Zealand College of Midwives.

## The public and midwifery profession expect that midwives:

- work under the laws, regulations and codes of New Zealand;
- work within the Midwifery Scope of Practice and hold a current Practising Certificate;
- work in partnership with professional colleagues ensuring that the woman's interests remain paramount;
- are expected to conduct themselves personally and professionally in a way that maintains public trust and confidence in the midwifery profession;
- act with integrity;
- are open and honest;
- do not discriminate unfairly against women or colleagues;
- do not abuse the woman's trust in themselves or the midwifery profession.

# Conduct statements

## 1 Professional relationships

### Through their conduct, Midwives ensure that:

- 1.1. Personal information is obtained and used in a professional way that is private and ensures confidentiality.
- 1.2. Professional relationships are maintained at all times:
  - Midwives avoid providing care to women with whom they have a close relationship.
  - Midwives have a responsibility to maintain professional boundaries between themselves and each woman and her family/whanau.
  - Midwives must not become involved in a sexual or emotional relationship with a woman in their care or a close member of the woman's family.
- 1.3. Their personal beliefs should not affect the advice or options that are provided to women.
- 1.4. They practise in a non-discriminatory way.
- 1.5. They end their professional relationship with women at the appropriate time and in a professional manner.
- 1.6. They provide impartial honest and accurate information in relation to midwifery care and health care products.
  - Any information that they provide about their midwifery services is factual and verifiable.
  - Advertising and promotional material should not foster unrealistic expectations.
  - Information that is provided must conform to identifiable laws and standards.

#### Guidance statements:

*All practitioners have a legal obligation to ensure that any information that they obtain remains private and practitioners are reminded of the need to maintain this privacy at all times. Gossip and the inappropriate divulgence of information are unacceptable.*

*When family relationships and friendships exist, it can be difficult for midwives to remain objective and to provide the care that women require. To avoid any potential compromise it is best if such women are referred to midwifery colleagues who can establish and create a professional midwifery relationship with the woman.*

*Women have the right to expect that they will receive professional midwifery care from every midwife. Midwives have an obligation to ensure that the care they provide to women is culturally competent and culturally safe.*

*Midwives have an obligation to provide evidence-based care for women and to avoid the promotion of any commercial treatment, advice or service that is offered. Further they should not promote any service of good for which they expect to receive any payment or benefit. If they do advertise they must ensure that the information that they provide is factual and the information that is provided is not advertising puffery.*

## **2 Inter-professional relationships**

**Through their conduct, Midwives ensure that:**

- 2.1 Due process is followed when a woman's care is being transferred or referred.
- 2.2 Work with their colleagues in a fair and respectful manner
  - They must not make malicious or unfounded criticisms of colleagues that may undermine women's trust in the care or treatment they receive or in judgment of those treating them,
  - They do not bully or harass one another.
- 2.3 When there is an emergency, they provide appropriate care to women. When a midwife calls for help, all midwives have a duty and obligation to attend and assist as able.

### **Guidance statements:**

*Midwives need to be aware that their behaviour towards other professionals can pose a risk of harm if it impacts on the care that women receive. It is vital that all members of the health care team work in a way that is conducive to safe care for the woman and this means that midwives must be aware of the way in which they communicate. Communication needs to be appropriate and respectful*

### 3 Professional behaviour

#### Through their conduct, Midwives ensure that:

- 3.1 They advocate the judicious use of social networking sites.
- 3.2 They recognize their professional position and do not accept gifts or benefits that could be viewed as a means of securing their influence or behaviour.
- 3.3 They claim benefits or remuneration only as and when appropriate for midwifery services that are provided.
- 3.4 They act in a way that does not bring the midwifery profession into disrepute.
- 3.5 They do not use drugs and alcohol in such a way that it impairs their clinical judgment.
- 3.6 They are fit and able to carry out the practice of midwifery.
- 3.7 If they are using medication to manage a condition then they have a responsibility to ensure that they adhere to the specified regime and through their actions do not place women and their babies at risk.

#### Guidance statement:

*Midwives understand that social networking sites are a way of communicating with friends and family. However midwives are reminded that information posted on these sites can be accessed by a number of people and therefore it is important for midwives to utilise caution when posting information or pictures onto sites. Individuals can be and have been identified through such sites as midwives because they list their qualifications or through their descriptions of activities and clinical advice. It is vital that midwives do not bring the midwifery profession into disrepute through using these sites.*

### **Accountability**

***Midwives are accountable for their practice and for their conduct. They are accountable to the woman, the profession and to the community.***

## References

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council. (2008). *Codes of professional conduct for nurses and midwives in Australia*. ACT: Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Health and Disability Commissioner. (2009). *Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers Rights*. Retrieved June 01, 2010, from Health and Disability Commissioner: [www.hdc.org.nz](http://www.hdc.org.nz)

Medical Council of New Zealand. (2008). *Good medical practice*. Wellington: Medical Council of New Zealand .

Medical Council of New Zealand. (2007, June). *Statement on providing care to yourself and those close to you*. Retrieved 06 01, 2010, from Medical Council of New Zealand: [www.mcnz.org.nz](http://www.mcnz.org.nz)

Medical Council of New Zealand. (2009). *Unprofessional behaviour and the health care team: Protecting patient safety*. Wellington: Medical Council of New Zealand.

Midwifery Council . (2004). *The Scope of Practice of a Midwife*. Retrieved June 01, 2010, from [www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz](http://www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz).

Midwifery Council of New Zealand. (2004, September). *Competencies for Entry to the Register of Midwives*. Retrieved July 2009, from Midwifery Council of New Zealand : [www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz](http://www.midwiferycouncil.org.nz)

Nursing and Midwifery Council. (2007). *The Code Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives*. London: Nursing and Midwifery Council.

NZCOM. (2008). *Midwives Handbook for Practice*. Christchurch: NZCOM.

Unknown. (2010). Your code of conduct. *Queensland nursing forum* , 29.