

Saskatchewan College of Midwives (SCM) Statement – Role of the Doula

Purpose of this Statement

This statement has been prepared for the purpose of clarifying the role of the doula and unauthorized midwifery practice in Saskatchewan.

Role of SCM as Regulator of Midwifery

The SCM is the regulating body for the profession of midwifery in the province of Saskatchewan. The SCM has the following duties and responsibilities:

- to serve and protect the public;
- to exercise its powers and discharge its responsibilities in the public interest;
- to regulate the practice of the profession and to govern the members in accordance with the Act and the bylaws;
- to assure the public of the knowledge, skill, proficiency and competency of members in the practice of midwifery.

The mandate of the SCM is to serve and protect the public interest by regulating midwifery practice in accordance with *The Midwifery Act*, *The Midwifery Regulations*, *The Regulatory Bylaws* and all other relevant legislation. The goal of the SCM is to register qualified, competent midwives to provide safe, high quality care to women and their families in the province of Saskatchewan.

Practice of Midwifery

Section 22 of *The Midwifery Act* prohibits persons who are not registered midwife members or licensed physicians from using the title “midwife”, or any word, title or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply that the person is a member of the College.

Section 23 of *The Midwifery Act* prohibits persons who are not registered midwife members or members of a regulated profession whose scope of practice includes the performance of an authorized practice, from performing any of the following “authorized practices”:

- assessing and monitoring women during normal pregnancy, labour and the post-partum period;
- conducting the spontaneous normal vaginal delivery of a baby;
- providing care to a woman and her healthy baby during a normal pregnancy, labour and post-partum period;
- prescribing, dispensing or administering drugs;
- ordering, performing or interpreting diagnostic tests;
- performing invasive procedures.

The type of care provided by midwives as referred to in section 23 of *The Midwifery Act* is both clinical and non-clinical, and relates to the expertise, education, knowledge, skills and abilities of the profession and what licensed members of the College are authorized to do.

Role of the Doula

A doula is a person who is trained to provide emotional, physical and evidence-based informational support to the birthing woman and her family before, during and immediately after the birth of a baby (in the case of a Labour Doula) and during the subsequent postpartum period (in the case of a Postpartum Doula). Doula care is non-clinical in nature.

Doulas are not regulated in Saskatchewan (or anywhere else in Canada) therefore no official set of standards or guidelines exists to regulate the provision of doula services. However, based on the midwifery legislation in Saskatchewan, a doula is **not** authorized to perform the “authorized practices” described above that are, in Saskatchewan, legislatively reserved to midwives, physicians, or members of other regulated professions.

For information on the role of a doula, the College has referenced the websites of Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association (CAPPA) and Doulas of North America (DONA), two organizations that provide training to doulas as well as the Association of Ontario Doulas, an organization that represents doulas in Ontario. Both CAPPA and DONA are recognized by the Association of Ontario Doulas as providing a curriculum that best matches their standards. The College agrees with the role and limitations outlined for doulas as articulated by these organizations.

The Saskatchewan College of Midwives acknowledges the important supportive role a doula plays while providing service to women and their families during labour and the postpartum period. The College is not interested in prosecuting or penalizing individuals who are working within the scope of their role as a doula.

The Midwifery Act

<http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/M14-1.pdf>

The Midwifery Regulations

<http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/English/Regulations/Regulations/M14-1R1.pdf>

CAPPA

<http://www.cappa.net/labor-doula> - click on Labour Doula Scope of Practice

<http://www.cappa.net/postpartum-doula> - click on Postpartum Doula Scope of Practice

DONA

<https://www.dona.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/COESOP-2017-FINAL-Birth.pdf>

<https://www.dona.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/COESOP-2017-FINAL-Postpartum.pdf>

Association of Ontario Doulas

<http://www.ontariodoulas.org/scope-of-practice>

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