

COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

FRAMEWORK FOR MIDWIFE CERTIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY VACUUM-ASSISTED BIRTH¹

Registered midwives in British Columbia manage labour and delivery under their own responsibility. When an assisted birth is required midwives must consult with an appropriately trained physician. The most skilled practitioner available should be asked to assist.

Conducting an emergency vacuum-assisted birth on their own responsibility is beyond the competencies required of entry-level midwives. Experienced midwives² with special training in vacuum-assisted delivery who are certified by the College of Midwives of BC (CMBC) and privileged to use this skill by their hospital may conduct a vacuum-assisted birth in an emergency if there is not a physician available who is more experienced in this skill. In the interest of certified midwives maintaining their skill, wherever possible midwives should take advantage of opportunities to conduct vacuum-assisted-deliveries under medical supervision.

Specialized practice certification in this competency area may be obtained through a course or program established or approved under the authority set out in the CMBC Bylaws that meets the requirements set out in this framework.

Documentation of specialized practice certification must be provided to and recognized by the hospital in which the midwife holds privileges, unless the hospital itself is administering the certification process.

Limitations - A midwife with specialized practice certification in this competency area may offer vacuum-assisted vaginal birth under the following conditions:

- There are convincing, compelling and urgent indications for assisted birth;
- The fetal head is fully engaged and the cervix is fully dilated;
- There is reason to believe that the attempt will be successful;
- There is an alternate plan arranged in the event that the vacuum-assisted birth is not successful;
- In the presence of abnormal fetal status, the midwife is concurrently arranging for appropriate consultation for the newborn.

Certification

The certification process must be carried out by a program that is approved by CMBC.

Upon successful completion of the certification process, proof of competence and a letter of recommendation from the supervising obstetrician must be submitted to CMBC before certification is granted.

Where competence in this area of specialized practice has been acquired in a jurisdiction outside of British Columbia CMBC may assess the certification program for equivalency in

¹ PLEASE NOTE: Certification programs are not yet in place. For more information, please contact CMBC.

² Only midwives who have completed their New Registrant period and can document a significant volume of clinical experience will be considered for certification.

meeting CMBC requirements. Evaluation by an obstetrician in a hospital and a letter of recommendation is required.

Specialized Practice Certification must include:

Demonstration of theoretical and practical knowledge of indications for, and proper procedure and protocol for vacuum-assisted birth, the advantages, disadvantages, risks and benefits of vacuum-assisted birth and appropriate client counseling to elicit the informed consent through the completion of study materials and successfully passing written and/or oral and or simulated practical assessments prior to the demonstration of clinical skills under supervision in hospital.

Demonstration of appropriate skills in vacuum-assisted birth will include:

1. Determination of appropriateness of, offering and conducting a vacuum-assisted birth;
2. Application and acceptable protocol for the use of a vacuum device;
3. Documentation of indications for, procedures followed and outcomes of assisted birth;

The certification process must include initiating and managing a **sufficient number of vacuum-assisted deliveries (a minimum of three) under the supervision** of an obstetrician to demonstrate competence. A letter of recommendation from the supervising obstetrician is required.

Recertification

A recertification program that includes vacuum assisted delivery will be needed if a midwife has not managed a sufficient number of vacuum-assisted births over the course of two years. An emergency skills course is required every two years in order to maintain midwifery registration in BC.

The need for recertification will depend on the number of vacuum-assisted births managed by the midwife in the preceding 24 months. The CMBC requires recertification where the midwife has managed fewer than two vacuum-assisted births over that period, although hospital specific requirements may vary. Registrants must keep a log of the number of vacuum-assisted births that they have performed and must submit the log to the CMBC at time of annual registration renewal for specialized certification eligibility.

PLEASE NOTE: Certification programs are not yet in place. For more information, please contact the CMBC.

References

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, 2006, *Advances in Labour and Risk Management (ALARM) Course Syllabus*, 13th Edition.

Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, 2004, *Clinical Practice Guidelines: Guidelines for Operative Vaginal Birth*. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*. Vol. 26(8), no. 148, p. 747-753.

World Health Organization (WHO), 2003, *Managing Complications in Pregnancy and Childbirth – a guide for midwives and doctors*. Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Family and Community Health.

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