



MIDWIFERY PRACTICE UNDER STANDARDIZED PROCEDURES PROHIBITED

It is the position of the Board of Registered Nursing that RNs may not practice midwifery under standardized procedures. This prohibition extends to RNs seeking to qualify for nurse-midwifery certification via equivalency method six (6); for these candidates clinical practice experience may be acquired only under the direct supervision of a certified nurse midwife (CNM) or physician qualified as specified in the California Administrative Code, Section 1462.c.3; i.e., the CNM or physician verifying competence must be physically present during the clinical practice experience of the RN. The Board's position in this regard is supported by standardized procedure guidelines in Section 1474 of the California Administrative Code, and by the legislative intent in granting statutory authority for the practice of nurse-midwifery (B & P Code, Article 2.5).

In respect to standardized procedures, these are used in an organized health care system to authorize an RN within the system to perform a specific advance function beyond the scope of RN practice; the standardized procedure function, however, may not be performed independently until the RN has met the requirements for education, experience and evaluation spelled out in the written standardized procedure document. This requirement that the RN attain competence prior to independent practice of the function coupled with the fact that midwifery is comprised of numerous advanced skills makes the application of standardized procedures to the independent practice of midwifery prohibitive; in other words the RN should not engage in the practice of midwifery without already having demonstrated competence to perform all midwifery functions.

In regard to legislative support, the Legislature granted specific statutory authority to the RN to practice midwifery upon meeting Board established education standards and becoming certified as a nurse-midwife by the California Board of Registered Nursing. It is apparent then that the legislative intent is that the RN who is not so certified shall not practice midwifery. This, in effect, prohibits the practice of midwifery by the RN under standardized procedures.