

## NZCOM CONSENSUS STATEMENT

### *Normal Birth*

Ratified at the Annual General Meeting, October, 2006

- **The New Zealand College of Midwives is committed to protecting, promoting and supporting normal birth.**
- **NZCOM is concerned with the rising level of unnecessary intervention occurring in childbirth in New Zealand.**
- **The underlying assumption in supporting normal birth is:**

*Normal birth provides the most favourable outcome in terms of physical and emotional wellbeing to the majority of women and their babies. The majority of women, where possible, wish to give birth to their babies normally.*

- **When keeping birth normal, midwifery care needs to be informed by evidence, and be consistent with the Midwifery Scope of Practice, Competencies and information contained within the Midwives Handbook for Practice (2005).**
- **Every action the midwife makes, from her first interaction with the woman, needs to support keeping birth normal thereby supporting the the normal cascade that occurs when labour and birth happen physiologically. Any and every interaction / decision affects this natural cascade in a positive or negative way**
- **This statement is supported further by the Collaborative Statement on Home Birth and Primary Birth Units:**

*“Women who are experiencing normal pregnancies should be offered the option and encouraged to give birth in primary maternity facilities or at home. The evidence clearly demonstrates that women who receive effective antenatal care and are assessed to be at low risk for complications, will give birth to healthy babies and need fewer interventions if they are supported to give birth in a primary maternity unit or at home.”*

Endorsed by:

Home Birth Aotearoa  
Federation of Women's Health Councils Aotearoa NZ  
Trauma and Birth Stress  
Post-natal Psychosis Support Group  
Women's Health Action  
Community Birth Services Trust  
Nga Maia O Aotearoa Me Te Waipounamu  
Birthcare Auckland Ltd and Birthcare Huntley Ltd  
Organisation  
Midwifery and Maternity Provider Organisation(MMPO)  
Midwifery Employee Representation & Advisory Services(MERAS)

MAMA Ltd  
La Leche League  
Maternity Services Consumer Council  
Parents Centre New Zealand  
Friends of Rangiora Hospital  
The College of Nurses Aotearoa NZ (Inc)  
New Zealand College of Midwives  
The New Zealand Nurses

Pregnancy Help

**Rationale for this statement**

## Midwives:

- are the health professionals with a primary role in promoting and protecting the normal process of pregnancy and childbirth
- are committed to the health and well-being of women and acknowledge that normal birth has health benefits for the majority of women and their babies
- have a responsibility to provide evidence-based research and culturally appropriate information about birthing that supports women to birth normally
- have a responsibility to protect and support the woman to birth normally
- support the “Ten World Health Organisation Principles of Perinatal Care”

## References:

Title A Comparison of partnership caseload midwifery care with conventional team midwifery care: labour and birth outcomes  
Author: Yvonne Benjamin, Denis Walsh and Nick Taub. 2001  
Source: Midwifery (2001) 17, 234-240 [www.ideallibrary.com](http://www.ideallibrary.com)

Title: Appropriate perinatal technology: a World Health Organisation perspective  
Author: Chalmers, B. Mangiaterra, V.  
Source : cited in MIDIRS Midwifery Digest March 2002, 130  
<http://www.rcmnormalbirth.net/>

Title: Primary maternity facilities; are they endangered species?  
Author: Hendry, C. 2005  
Source: New Zealand College of Midwives Midwifery News, 39, 25.

Title Continuity of caregivers for care during pregnancy and childbirth  
Author: E D Hodnett  
Source: The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2000, Issue 11, Art. No.: CD000062.DO1:10.1002/14651858.CD000062.  
[www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com](http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com)

Title: Homebirth  
Author: International Confederation of Midwives, 2005  
Source: [www.internationalmidwives.org](http://www.internationalmidwives.org)

Title Place of birth  
Author: International Confederation of Midwives, 2005  
Source: [www.internationalmidwives.org](http://www.internationalmidwives.org)

Title Outcomes of planned home births versus planned hospital births after regulation of midwifery in British Columbia  
Author: Janssen Patricia A, Lee SK, Ryan EM, Etches DJ, Farquharson DF, Peacode D, Klein MC. 2002. Canadian Medical Association Journal: 166 (3)  
Source: [www.cmaj.ca](http://www.cmaj.ca)

Title: Outcomes of planned home births with certified professional midwives: large prospective study in North America.  
Author: Johnson, K. 2005, June  
Source: *bmj.com*, 330 (1416). Retrieved August 2, 2005 from  
[http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/reprint\\_abr/330/7505/1416](http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/reprint_abr/330/7505/1416)

Title: Outcomes of Free-Standing Midwife-Led Birth Centers: A Structured Review  
Author: Walsh, D. Downe, S. 2004  
Source: Birth 31:3 222-229

The purpose of New Zealand College of Midwives Consensus Statements is to provide women, midwives and the maternity services with the profession's position on any given situation. The guidelines are designed to educate and support best practice.

All position statements are regularly reviewed and updated in line with evidence-based practice.