

## Consensus Statement: Normal Birth

- **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 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:

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| • Home Birth Aotearoa   | MAMA Ltd                                |
| • Federation of Women’s Health Councils Aotearoa NZ             | La Leche League                         |
| • Trauma and Birth Stress                                       | Maternity Services Consumer Council     |
| • Post-natal Psychosis Support Group                            | Parents Centre New Zealand              |
| • Women’s Health Action   | Friends of Rangiora Hospital            |
| • Community Birth Services Trust                                | The College of Nurses Aotearoa NZ (Inc) |
| • Nga Maia O Aotearoa Me Te Waipounamu                          | New Zealand College of Midwives         |
| • Birthcare Auckland Ltd and Birthcare Huntley Ltd              | The New Zealand Nurses Organisation     |
| • Midwifery and Maternity Provider Organisation (MMPO)          | Pregnancy Help                          |
| • Midwifery Employee Representation & Advisory Services (MERAS) |   |

### Rationale:

#### 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”

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## Ratification:

*Ratified at the Annual General Meeting, October, 2006*  
*References updated July 2009*

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.