

What standards do midwives have to meet?

Midwives are regulated by the Nurses Board of South Australia to ensure that they have met minimum competency standards. Midwives are also expected to be self regulating and continually assessing their own competence. The Nurses Board of South Australia has endorsed the Australian College of Midwives Incorporated (ACMI) *Competency Standards for Midwives* July 2002 and requires that all midwives registered in South Australia comply with these standards and the ACMI Code of *Professional Conduct* and *Code of Ethics*.

Where a midwife is also registered as a registered nurse they may also practise as a nurse. Where this occurs they are required to comply with the Australian Nursing Council (ANC) *Competency Standards for the Registered Nurse* and the ANC *Code of Professional Conduct* and *Code of Ethics*.

How do I know if the person providing my care is a midwife?

The Nurses Board provides information about all midwives on the register. This information includes the midwife's full name, their status and qualifications. This information is available to the public via the NBSA Website **on-line register/roll** www.nursesboard.sa.gov.au or by contacting the Nurses Board directly on **(08) 8223 9777**.



What is a Midwife?

nursesboardsouthaustralia



nursesboardsouthaustralia
PO Box 7176 Hutt Street Adelaide SA 5000
Office hours 9.00am – 5.00pm
Payment hours 9.00am – 4.30pm
Telephone (08) 8223 9700
Facsimile (08) 8223 9707
Email ceo-registrar@nursesboard.sa.gov.au
Website www.nursesboard.sa.gov.au

SHADIJESTGN

What is a Midwife?

A midwife is a person who is registered under the specific Nurses Act or Nurses and Midwives Act of the state or territory in which they work. In South Australia midwives are registered under the *Nurses Act 1999*. Midwifery is a regulated profession therefore midwives are accountable to the public for providing the highest standard of care by maintaining the highest professional standards of competence and conduct in midwifery.

A midwife is a professional who, in partnership with the woman, provides care, education and support during the childbearing cycle. Midwives work with women, partners and families during prenatal, pregnancy, birth, postnatal and early parenting. Midwives believe that childbirth is an essentially normal significant life event for women and their families.

The midwife forms a partnership with the woman as she experiences the life process of childbearing. This begins with preparation and decision-making for childbirth and includes the care of the woman's pre-pregnancy and during all phases of childbearing and early parenting. The focus of midwifery care is the woman herself. Midwifery care incorporates the inclusion of the family and where possible those considered significant to the woman.

International Definition of a Midwife

A midwife is a person who, having been regularly admitted to a midwifery educational program, duly recognised in the country in which it is located, has successfully completed the prescribed course of study in midwifery and has acquired the requisite qualifications to be legally licensed to practice midwifery. Authorisation as a midwife is dependent upon successful completion of an accredited midwifery education program.

Education Programs Leading to Registration as a Midwife

The Nurses Board of South Australia approves programs leading to registration as a midwife. The graduates of these programs are awarded the Bachelor of Midwifery. There are two options available for completing the Bachelor of Midwifery. The three year program is a direct entry program for non-nurses. The one year program is for registered nurses who wish to gain an additional qualification in midwifery. These Board approved programs are offered at two universities in South Australia (the University of South Australia and Flinders University). At the completion of either of these programs the successful graduate will have met the required minimum competency level for registration with the Nurses Board of South Australia as a Registered Midwife.

How are midwives regulated?

The Nurses Board of South Australia regulates the practice of midwifery in the public interest and determines the scope of midwifery practice. The Nurses Board regulates midwifery practice by determining scope of practice, approving courses that lead to a person being eligible to become a midwife, setting the requirements for a person to register as a midwife, endorsing standards and codes of conduct and defining and protecting the title of 'midwife' so that the public are assured that a midwife has met these requirements and standards.

A midwife who does not maintain the standards and codes of conduct expected of the profession can be reported to the Board. The Board will investigate the fitness of the person to practice as a midwife and may place restrictions or limitations on their registration or may remove them from the register.