Community Midwife Job Description

The community midwife works in the country’s provincial and district health centres (comprehensive and basic) to predominantly deliver reproductive health care services to women. She assumes responsibility and accountability for her practice, applying up to date knowledge and skills in caring for each woman and family. She works as a member of a team that includes doctors (including ob/gyn specialists), midwives, nurses, paramedicals and community health workers.

The **responsibilities** of the community midwife are to:

1. Give the necessary supervision, care and advise to women during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period
2. Conduct deliveries on her own and care for the newborn infant
3. Manage complications in pregnancy and childbirth, in accordance with the principles of basic emergency obstetric care
4. Provide primary care to women of reproductive age, in accordance with the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS)
5. Supervise the provision of primary health care within the community by female community health workers
6. Counsel and educate women, the family and the community, in relevant areas of health including preparation for parenthood and childbirth
7. Provide all non-surgical methods of family planning, and counselling for surgical methods
8. Obtain specialised assistance as necessary (consultation or referral)
9. Share knowledge, skill and expertise with midwifery, medical and nursing students, and nursing and resident staff, in management of pregnancy and childbirth, acting as a clinical preceptor
10. Perform limited, select administrative duties such as patient charting, recording and reporting of data; clinic and/or facility management (as required); or coordination of specific educational or outreach programs
11. Participate in research, professional organizations and related committees; and in continuing education opportunities
12. Follow established health centre policies, procedures and objectives; continuous quality improvement initiatives; safety, environmental, and infection prevention standards
13. Participate in provision of 24-hour, 7-day maternity service, which may require evening, night or on-call duty
The required competencies\(^1\) in order to successfully perform the above services include:

**Competency 1:** Community midwives have the requisite knowledge and skills from the social sciences, the public health sector and ethics that form the basis of high quality, culturally relevant, appropriate care for women, their newborns, and their families.

**Competency 2:** Community midwives provide high quality, culturally sensitive health education and family planning services in the community in order to promote healthy family life, planned pregnancies and positive parenting.
- Provide information and counselling on family planning.
- Provide all methods of non-surgical family planning services (clinical and non-clinical).
- Provide counselling and referral information for surgical methods of contraception.

**Competency 3:** Community midwives provide high quality antenatal care to maximize the woman’s health during pregnancy, detect early and manage/refer any complications.
- Diagnose pregnancy and perform antenatal history and examination.
- Provide early detection and referral of non-emergent complications.
- Provide tetanus toxoid immunization, iron and folic acid and other antenatal preventive measures according to the BPHS
- Advise on development of birth plan, and promote the concept of birth preparedness and complication readiness
- Counsel on prenatal self care, including nutrition, hygiene, breastfeeding and danger signs in pregnancy and childbirth
- Detect and manage/refer obstetric emergencies, according to the principles of basic emergency obstetric care

**Competency 4:** Community midwives provide high quality, culturally sensitive care during labour; conduct a clean, safe delivery; give care to the newborn, and manage/refer emergencies effectively to prevent maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity.
- Perform history and exam of the labouring woman and diagnose labour
- Manage labour, using the partograph
- Assist the woman in clean, safe and humanistic childbirth
- Conduct active management of the third stage of labour for reduction of post partum haemorrhage
- Diagnose (using the partograph) and manage/refer women with prolonged second stage labour, and diagnose and refer women with other labour abnormalities
- Treat postpartum haemorrhage (including manual removal of placenta and injection oxytocics). Stabilize and refer required cases.
- Detect and manage (or refer) obstetric emergencies, according to the principles of basic emergency obstetric care
- Refer complications of labor and birth when necessary

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\(^1\) Adapted from World Health Organization, Competencies for Midwifery Practice (Adapted from the Provisional Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice Prepared by the International Confederation of Midwives, 1999).
**Competency 5:** Community midwives provide comprehensive, high quality, culturally sensitive postnatal care for women.

- Provide immediate postpartum care, including history, examination and counselling
- Provide postpartum assessment(s) of mother and infant
- Offer postpartum family planning counselling and services
- Counsel on breastfeeding and provide nutritional support to woman
- Detect and manage obstetric emergencies, according to the principles of basic emergency obstetric care
- Refer postpartum complications when necessary

**Competency 6:** Community midwives provide high quality care for the newborn infant and surveillance and preventive care for young children.

- Provide immediate newborn care with a focus on airway, warmth and breastfeeding
- Provide emergency measures for newborn resuscitation
- Provide routine newborn care, including physical examination, care of the umbilical cord, immunization, etc.
- Provide emergency care for newborns (including hypothermia, infections of eye or cord stump, etc.) and infants, according to principles of IMCI
- Encourage exclusive breastfeeding and provide nutrition counselling to mothers on introduction of appropriate weaning foods
- Provide basic care for infants including history and examination; care provision including care for ARI and CDD; preventative care including immunization and growth monitoring; and counselling to parents on infant and child care and danger signs
- Monitor newborn and child growth and development; identify malnourished children and refer for management
- Provide preventative care, including immunization, to young children
- Identify and refer conditions or complications beyond the scope of practice

**Competency 7:** Community midwives participate in the promotion of health and wellness in the community and serve as a link between the community and the health system.

- Support community health workers in their provision of community based health care by participating in, and providing technical guidance as required, during periodic CHW meetings
- Provide supportive clinical supervision and technical information to CHWs regarding maternal and newborn health
- Support CHW and TBA with respect to referral cases brought to the facility
- Work with CHW and community leaders to promote the concept of birth preparedness and complication readiness related to pregnancy, delivery and newborn care
- Partner with TBAs to bring them and their services into the health system