

## WELCOME TO THE MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA *Department of Consumer Affairs*

### Licensed Midwives

➤ Revised 2008 Licensed Midwife Annual Report Summary

The newly revised figures are the result of changes from late reports filed after the aggregate Annual Report Summary originally released June 12, 2009, as well as corrections from original reporters who filed revised reports.

Please note in particular changes in the figures for fetal and maternal deaths.

➤ Midwifery Advisory Council (MAC) Meeting Notice

➤ Link to OSHPD for the 2009 Licensed Midwife Annual Report

A "licensed midwife" is an individual who has been issued a license to practice midwifery by the Medical Board of California. The practice of midwifery authorizes the licensee, under the supervision of a licensed physician and surgeon, in active practice cases of normal childbirth, in a home, birthing clinic, or hospital environment. For the purposes of California licensure, these care professionals commonly are referred to as licensed midwives.

Licensed midwives, who have achieved the required educational and clinical experience in midwifery or met the challenge, must pass the North American Registry of Midwives' (NARM) comprehensive examination. After successful completion of the examination, prospective applicants are designated as a "certified professional midwife" and are eligible to submit an application for California midwifery licensure.

The comprehensive licensing examination developed by NARM was adopted by the Medical Board of California, Division of Business and Professions, in May 1996, and satisfies the written examination requirements described in Business and Professions Code section 2512.5. The NARM examination is administered twice a year, usually in February and August, at various locations throughout the United States.

The profession of midwifery also has another designation, that of "certified nurse-midwife" (CNM). CNMs are licensed by the Board of Registered Nursing. CNMs are registered nurses who acquired additional training in the field of obstetrics and gynecology through the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM). They commonly work in hospitals and birthing centers that also are licensed by the state and also require physician supervision. Further information or verification of licensure for a CNM may be obtained from the Board of Registered Nursing at (916) 322-3350, (800) 838-6828, or at [www.mn.ca.gov](http://www.mn.ca.gov).

There are two pathways to licensure as a midwife in California:

- **Education.** Candidates must complete a three-year postsecondary education program in an accredited midwifery program approved by the board. These schools usually are accredited by the Midwifery Education and Accreditation Council, whose accreditation mirrors that of the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) requirements, and satisfies Medical Board of California criteria. Upon completion of educational requirements, including clinical experience evaluation, the candidate can successfully complete a comprehensive licensing examination administered by NARM.

Additionally, an applicant for California licensure also may show current licensure as a midwife by another state with standards equivalent to those of the Medical Board of California (Business and Professions Code section 2512.5).

- **Challenge Mechanism.** As defined in Business and Professions Code section 2513(a)-(c), the challenge process provides a midwifery student and prospective applicant the opportunity to obtain credit by examination for previous midwifery clinical experience. This opportunity is provided by two approved "challenge process" programs. Maternidad La Loma, Paso, TX, and the National Midwifery Institute, Inc., (NMI) in Bristol, VT, are the two board-approved challenge process mechanisms that are available for California licensure. Upon successful completion of the challenge process, the applicant must successfully complete the comprehensive licensing examination. The candidate then may submit an application for licensure.

Licensure verification for licensed midwives may be obtained by contacting the Medical Board's Consumer Information 2382, or by selecting the "License Search for Licensed Midwives" link at the bottom of this page.

For more specific information related to licensed midwives, please call (916) 263-2382, e-mail [Webmaster@mbc.ca.gov](mailto:Webmaster@mbc.ca.gov)

Medical Board of California  
Attn: Midwifery Program  
2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 1200  
Sacramento, CA 95815

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- [License Search for Licensed Midwives](#)
- [Summary of the Licensed Midwifery Practice Act of 1993](#)
- [Standards of Care](#)
  - [California Code of Regulations Section 1379.19](#)
  - ["Standards of Care for California Licensed Midwives" \(September 15, 2005 Edition\)](#)
  - [ACOG Practice Bulletin: Vaginal Birth After Previous Cesarean Delivery](#)
- [Business and Professions Code, Sections 2505 - 2521](#)
- [California Code of Regulations, Sections 1379.1 - 1379.31](#)
- [Licensed Midwife Disclosure Form](#)
- [Approved Licensed Midwifery Schools](#)
- [Approved Challenge Program](#)

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## **Summary of the Licensed Midwifery Practice Act of 1993**

The law specifies the requirements for licensure and the scope of practice for a licensed midwife. The Licensing Program of the Medical Board of California (Board) is responsible for issuing a license to practice midwifery to all applicants who meet the requirements and pay a prescribed fee.

The law provides that:

- The holder of a midwifery license, under the supervision of a licensed physician and surgeon, is to attend cases of normal childbirth.
- The licensed midwife may provide prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum care, including family-planning care for the mother and immediate care for the newborn.
- The licensed midwife is to disclose to the client that a supervising physician is regularly being briefed concerning the client's pregnancy.
- The supervising physician, as described in section 2507 of the Code, is to have a current practice or training in obstetrics.
- The supervising physician is to assume care of the client should complications arise.
- A supervising physician cannot supervise more than four licensed midwives.
- No person other than a licensed midwife, may hold himself/herself out as a licensed midwife or use any other term which may indicate or imply that he/she is a licensed midwife.
- A licensed midwife cannot hold himself or herself out as a certified nurse-midwife, nurse midwife, or use the initials "CNM", unless he or she has been certified as a nurse midwife under Business and Professions Code, Article 2.5 Nurse-Midwives.
- The Board is to issue a license to practice midwifery to all applicants who meet the requirements and pay the required fee.
- An applicant for licensure must successfully complete a three-year postsecondary midwifery educational program accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education, Division of Accreditation, and successfully complete a comprehensive licensing examination adopted by the Board which is equivalent, but not identical, to the American College of Nurse-Midwives exam, or;

must successfully complete an approved midwifery education program that offers the opportunity for students to obtain credit for previous midwifery education and clinical experiences and successfully complete the written licensing examination, or;

must have successfully completed an educational program approved by the Board and is currently licensed as a midwife by a state with equivalent licensing standards. (Reciprocity)

- The midwifery education program will allow the applicant to demonstrate, by practical examination, clinical competencies.
- The midwifery education program's credit by examination policy must be approved by the Board.
- Completion of clinical experiences must be verified by a licensed midwife or certified nurse-midwife and a physician and surgeon, all of whom shall be current in the knowledge and practice of obstetrics and midwifery.

- The Board must approve specific educational programs that meet the requirements for the course of academic study, documentation of experience and skill and clinical evaluation. These programs must also be accredited by an accrediting organization approved by the Board.
- Applicants must show evidence satisfactory to the Board that he/she has met the education standards established by the Board.
- A person, who has been convicted of a misdemeanor violation of unlicensed practice (Business & Professions Code section 2505) prior to January 1, 1994, cannot be barred from licensure, solely because of that conviction.
- Licenses for licensed midwifery must be renewed every two years upon payment of the current fee and certification of 36 hours of approved continuing education.
- An expired license may be reinstated within five years from the expiration upon payment of the current fee and upon submission of proof of the applicant's qualifications.
- The current licensing fee is \$300.00, renewal fee is \$200.00, and the delinquency fee is \$50.00.
- The Board may suspend or revoke the license of a licensed midwife for any of the following:
  - Unprofessional conduct.
  - Procuring a license by fraud or misrepresentation.
  - Conviction of a crime substantially related to the qualifications, function and duties of a licensed midwife.
  - Procuring, aiding, abetting, attempting, agreeing to procure, offering to procure, or assisting at, a criminal abortion.
  - Violating or attempting to violate, directly or indirectly, or assisting in or abetting the violation of, or conspiring to violate any provision or term of this chapter.
  - Making or giving false statements or information in connection with the application for issuance of a license.
  - Impersonating any applicant or acting as proxy for any applicant in an examination required for licensure.
  - Impersonating another licensed practitioner, or permitting or allowing another person to use his or her license for the purpose of providing midwifery services.
  - Aiding or assisting, or agreeing to aid or assist any person or persons, whether a licensed physician or not, in the performance of, arranging for, a violation of any of the provisions of Article 12 of Chapter 5.
- Violators of this article are guilty of a misdemeanor.

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