



# MIDWIFE FACT SHEET

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**In Michigan, 30% of counties lack access to obstetric care are considered “maternal health deserts.” Midwives are part of the solution.**

According to the World Health Organization, midwifery care is the number one way to combat maternal morbidity worldwide. In countries that lead on maternal health, 80% of births are attended by midwives. In Michigan, less than 15% of families have access to midwives.

Midwives are licensed, educated, skillful perinatal health care providers trained to provide care through the reproductive lifespan and meet newborn care needs.

**Midwives are experts in physiological pregnancy, labor, birth and the postpartum period. Greater access to midwives is a win for Michigan families!**

## WHAT TYPES OF MIDWIVES PRACTICE IN MICHIGAN?

In Michigan there are two midwifery credentials, both requiring completion of a national certification exam:

- (1) **Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNMs)** are advanced practice nurses and can practice in hospitals, homes, office settings and birth centers.
- (2) **Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs)**, who in Michigan are **Licensed Midwives (LMs)**, can practice in homes, office settings and birth centers.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MIDWIFERY CARE?

**There are many well-researched benefits to midwifery care, including improved birth outcomes, greater patient satisfaction, health system cost savings and reduced health care disparities.**

- Midwives provide evidence-based, inclusive perinatal health care for expectant families across birth settings (hospital, birth center and home).
- Midwives provide comprehensive perinatal health care, including laboratory testing, diagnostic screening, ultrasounds, fetal monitoring, vital measuring and monitoring, labor and birth management, emergency assessment and management skills, and individualized postpartum care for birthing parents and newborns.
- Families benefit from longer visits, open-ended questions, trust building and shared decision making, leading to greater autonomy, respect, and patient satisfaction.
- Historically, midwives were from the communities they served and understood the cultural practices, sacred traditions and needs of their communities. Today midwives representative of the communities they serve provide cultural reverent care that reflects and honors the cultures and life experiences of the families they serve.

#### IS MIDWIFERY CARE COVERED BY INSURANCE?

**In Michigan, insurance coverage for midwifery care varies by birth setting and limits access to birth care options for birthing families most in need.**

- Midwives who practice in hospitals are covered by private and public insurance.
- Midwives who practice in birth centers and homes face reimbursement challenges and have to rely on cash payments from families.

**Midwives are licensed health care providers and should be reimbursed in all safe birth settings: hospital, birth center and home.**

#### COST SAVINGS?

**On average, the cost of low-risk childbirth with midwives is \$2,262 less than low-risk childbirth managed by obstetricians.**

Cost differences derive from lower rates of medical intervention, including cesarean section, and lower rates of low birth weight and preterm birth among women with midwifery care compared with obstetric care.

**Financial feasibility studies show that if midwives led care for 20% of births, savings would reach \$4 billion by 2027.**

## MIDWIFE MYTHBUSTERS?

**Midwives and doulas are NOT the same. Midwives are primary health care providers – doulas are not health care providers.** Midwives and doulas are often linked together because of the personalized care they provide for families. Midwives should be thought of as primary perinatal health care providers like obstetricians.

**Midwifery care is SAFE care.**

### References

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