

## **Consent for Midwifery Care and Home Birth**

Ideally, giving birth is a joyful deeply personal experience which leaves a woman in awe of her own strength and in love with her baby. As a midwife I am privileged to support women and their families through this experience. My role as a midwife is to encourage a woman in her own ways of moving through pregnancy, labor, and birth. I work with her to promote a healthy pregnancy, and provide education to help her make informed decisions about her own care. Together with my clients, I carefully monitor the progress of the pregnancy and labor, and recommend appropriate management if complications arise. The key elements of this education, monitoring, and decision making process are based on Evidenced-Based Practice and Informed Consent.

Evidence-Based Practice refers to a thoughtful integration of the best available evidence, coupled with clinical expertise. As such it enables midwives and their clients to address healthcare questions with an evaluative and qualitative approach. Evidence based decisions flow from a process that includes the assessment of current and past research, clinical guidelines, and other information resources in order to determine the best course of care.

Typically, Informed Consent refers to the rights of healthcare consumers to be fully informed with the best possible evidence that includes risks and benefits about testing or treatment options so that they can then make a shared decision with their provider among those options. This is in contrast to a model of care in which the health professional decides for the patient what treatment is in her best interest.

**Prenatal Profile is Required by Virginia State Law, which includes legal penalties for the Midwife for failing to screen during the current pregnancy:** This panel includes Complete Blood Count with Differential, Blood Type, RH factor, antibody screen, Rubella Antibody Titer, Hepatitis B, HIV, Syphilis, Gonorrhea/Chlamydia screening, Urine Culture.

### **Mid-Pregnancy Anatomy Ultrasound is required for all clients of Birth & Biodynamic**

As a licensed midwife I provide complete care for normal pregnancy, labor, home birth, and the postpartum period. I generally begin care between 8-12 weeks and see women for a 60 minute prenatal visits every month until 28 weeks. Between 28-37 weeks, we see women every two weeks and after 37 weeks as frequently as weekly in the last month of pregnancy. At least one midwife and an assistant will attend your birth. I will see you and your newborn in your home for at least 2 postpartum visits (usually at 24 and 72 hours) and 1 six-week postpartum visit back in our office. During prenatal visits there will be time set aside for discussion, a physical evaluation of health, and bodywork. In my practice, I offer clients Maya Abdominal Therapy, Deep Tissue Massage and Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy as part of care after 20 weeks gestation. My clients have found these gentle techniques to have been beneficial during their pregnancy, birth and postpartum recovery.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to home birth, and each family must decide which birth setting feels best for them. Home birth allows women more control over their environment; over how they will birth and who will be with them. The main disadvantage of home birth is the limited or delayed availability of emergency equipment and procedures. Most obstetrical complications are not emergencies and many are predictable beforehand. Complications are best minimized with a healthy mother who maintains good nutrition and receives skilled screening and consistent prenatal care. True emergencies are rare and usually allow for sufficient time to get to a hospital, but there are no guarantees.

Each woman must weigh for herself the risks of birthing outside an emergency facility against the risks of in- hospital birthing, where the risks of unnecessary interventions, emergency-

mentality, and hospital born infections present their own dangers. Babies (and very rarely, mothers) do sometimes die in spite of the best care and great love. It happens at home and in the hospital. Please feel free to ask us questions regarding our experience with complicated births. We want you to have confidence in the care you have chosen. Ultimately, this will create a comfortable environment in which to birth your baby.

The majority of studies on the safety of homebirth show that homebirth is safe for low risk pregnant women, provided there is a skilled attendant present. Homebirth studies also demonstrate that good outcomes are achieved with very low rates of intervention, such as labor induction, labor augmentation and cesarean section. These procedures are used at very high rates in low risk hospital births. We personally believe, and evidence shows, that home birth is safe, but we are not against hospitals. Hospitals are vital for women and babies with complications, and for those who simply feel uncomfortable at home. Ultimately the choice is yours and its best the woman chooses the place to birth where she feels the safest.

The practice of midwifery by Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) is regulated by the Virginia Board of Medicine. Under Virginia law CPMs are referred to as licensed midwives (LMs). In short, LM regulations require that midwives maintain CPM certification through the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM). This requires continuing education, neonatal resuscitation certification, and adult CPR certification. Also as part of our certification, CPMs are required to participate in a peer review process. During peer review, client health information will be shared in confidence with other CPMs. Virginia regulations also require additional disclosures which will be provided to you in a separate document.

Birth & Biodynamics Midwifery consists of a solo-practice licensed-midwife, Dominique Clothiaux. Dominique is a CPM and has been attending births in the Charlottesville area since 2010. She has attended birth at home, hospital and birth center. Her clinical experience entails nearly 500 births as of 2021. She is also a Licensed Massage Therapist, Registered Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist and Pre and Perinatal Birth Educator.

Most CPMs train through a combination of formal education and apprenticeship. Traditionally, midwifery training was passed down from woman to woman as a sacred art. We hold this model of training to be the hallmark of midwifery and to that end strive to incorporate apprentices into our practice. Some prenatal visits and births will be attended by one midwife one professional birth assistant. All care provided by my assistants will be under the supervision of the senior midwife and with the permission of the client.

As licensed a licensed midwife I am most comfortable transferring care to the University of Virginia Hospital in Charlottesville. I will make arrangements for transfer with the attending physician and accompany you to the hospital. In my experience I have always remained with our clients during the course of their care in hospital. I have found the physicians and staff to be respectful of my position as midwife and families desire for home birth. A specific emergency transport plan will be developed with each individual client.

After the birth of your baby, I would like to celebrate this event with others in the Birth & Biodynamic Midwifery community. We do this by posting a birth announcement with a photograph on our Instagram or Facebook account possibly displaying a photo of your baby and yourself.

Under both our license and certification we are required to establish practice guidelines, which serve as an outline for the scope of our practice. Our practice guidelines document is available to all of our clients upon request.

You will be given an opportunity to ask us questions about this document. Please keep this copy for your records and return the following signature page at your next visit.

Informed Disclosure for Midwifery Care and HIPAA Signature Page

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Informed Disclosure for Home Birth Document and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

HIPAA Disclosures

Please take a moment to read about your rights under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and affirm the following authorizations for disclosure of protected health information (PHI):

Birth & Biodynamic Midwifery may use or disclose your PHI to carry out treatment, payment, or healthcare operations (TPO) related to your care. Examples would be: medical consultations, referrals, or transfer of care, lab or ultrasound orders, and insurance claims on your behalf.

You have the right to:

- Request access to your health record at any time
- Request corrections be made to your health record
- Request that all communications regarding your care with Birth & Biodynamic Midwifery be restricted from unsecure transmissions (fax, email, voice mail)
- Complain about a perceived violation of your privacy to us, our licensing board, our certification board, or the US Office for Civil Rights
- Refuse any of the following authorizations:

I agree to allow Birth & Biodynamic Midwifery to discuss my treatment and care with colleagues as part of professional peer review. Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

I agree to allow a photo my baby or me to be posted on the Birth & Biodynamic Midwifery Social Media page with personal identifiers that may include my baby's first name and birth weight. Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

I agree to allow Birth & Biodynamic Midwifery to use photos that I share with them for the purpose of education in presentations about midwifery and home birth. Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Birth And Biodynamic Midwifery has my permission to disclose my protected health information to the following family members or friends: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_