



Strengthening Midwifery Globally

HOME BIRTH

Position statement

BACKGROUND

The World Health Report 2005 states that 'There is a value in the rituals surrounding birth, and in keeping these as a central feature of family life. There is a consequent need and demand for care that is close to where and how people live, close to their birthing culture, but at the same time safe, with a skilled professional'. Childbirth is a social and emotional event and the care given should take into consideration the individual woman's cultural and social needs in her own environment.

The setting for birth may therefore be the woman's home, a local health facility or, if medical or surgical care is likely to be needed, a hospital.

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The International Confederation of Midwives believes that, in environments where women can make a choice as to where they give birth, among the options they are able to consider for a safe birth should be their homes.

POSITION

The ICM supports the right of women to make an informed decision to give birth at home. The midwife who elects to provide professional services for women in their homes should be able to do so within a nation's health service.

The ICM recognises that not all nations have the legislation or health service structure which supports home birth, and urges national governments to review the scientific literature on the subject and progress to a maternity service which includes it as an option for women giving birth.

GUIDING STATEMENT TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS:

Member Associations based in countries where women do not have access to a full range of options as to where they can safely give birth, are encouraged to negotiate with their governments for this to occur.

RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

- ICM position statement. Appropriate Maternity Services for Normal Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Postnatal Period. ICM, 2002.

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- World Health Report 2005. Make every mother and child count. Geneva,

- Switzerland: WHO, 2005.
- Care in Normal Birth: a Practical Guide. Report of a technical working group. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO, 1996.

Adopted at Brisbane Council meeting, 2005

Due for next review 2011