APPROPRIATE MATERNITY SERVICES FOR NORMAL PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH AND THE POSTNATAL PERIOD

BACKGROUND
Pregnancy and birth are normal physiological events. The provision of care for women before and during pregnancy should seek to explore and include their views and opinions in relation to pregnancy and childbirth options. 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 absence of midwifery care during pregnancy or the provision of maternity care that is service-centred rather than woman-centred promotes the medicalisation of pregnancy and childbirth.

POSITION
The ICM is committed to all women having access to midwifery care during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. ICM supports the right of women and their partners to receive parenting preparation and education, and encourages its members to promote the role of midwives as the most appropriate professional group to provide such preparation. The ICM also works with policy-makers at global level to help ensure that both midwives and women are involved in the planning of maternity services.

- All women should have access to midwifery care and support before and during pregnancy, during childbirth and in the postnatal period, irrespective of economic means
- All women and their partners should have access to parenting preparation and education during pregnancy, the content of which should be parent-centred rather than service-centred
- All women and their partners should be informed of their right to pregnancy and childbirth preparation and education from midwives. This can only occur if the guardians of maternity services share information and collaborate in partnership with women.
- It is incumbent on midwives to promote their role as the providers of midwifery care.
- In each country, those services that seek to serve and meet the needs of women as they give birth to future generations must be designed and planned in partnership with women.
RECOMMENDATIONS
Member associations are urged to be active in promoting the role and activities of the midwife to the general population. Midwives must endeavor to be participants in designing and planning the organization and delivery of maternity services in partnership with women.

RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS
ICM Position Statement. The midwife is the first choice health care professional for child bearing women. (2008)

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Adopted at Vienna International Council meeting, 2002
Revised and endorsed at Durban International Council meeting, 2011
Due for next review 2017