

# The Home Birth Safety Act and the Needs of Emergency Responders

Emergency responders know the distance to a hospital with birth services in South Dakota can be very long, especially when weather conditions make travel difficult or even impossible. While many emergency responders have had some introduction to birth, the opportunity to have in the community an experienced midwife with specific training in birth outside of the hospital would improve the level of safety for all.

In South Dakota, midwives currently are very difficult to locate, and not all the people calling themselves midwives have the education and experience needed to provide safe care. The Home Birth Safety Act (HBSA) addresses the needs of the emergency responders working in the community.

HBSA licenses only midwives who have obtained NCCA accredited midwife credentials. Lay midwives and informally apprenticed midwives need not apply.

HBSA requires midwives to practice according to evidence-based guidelines and nationally recognized and legally-defensible practice standards. It requires rules and regulations that ensure timely consultation and referral to obstetricians and other members of the healthcare team when needed. Midwives who fail to offer referral to a higher level of care at the earliest sign of complications will not be allowed to practice.

HBSA requires rules and regulations regarding appropriate transfer of care with complete records, full disclosure of all history and facts related to the patient's care, and continuation of emergency measures until hand-off to a qualified provider is completed. There will be no more mysterious catastrophes abandoned at emergency room doors or left for ambulance crews to clean up.

HBSA restricts prescribing privileges from licensed midwives. Licensed midwives use medications only according to guidelines established under this act and will only be able to obtain medications on the prescription of a physician. Practicing within these guidelines will ensure that necessary emergency medications are available at the scene.

HBSA limits the liability of physician and hospital to only those services they provided following appropriate transfer of care. Physicians, hospitals and emergency responders are protected from liability for errors not their own.

HBSA protects patients from falling into the care of unqualified underground midwives by maintaining a list of licensed, qualified midwives, held accountable for the services they provide. Helping people find qualified care reduces the possibility of an emergency call to a catastrophe caused by inappropriate care.



**Support the Home Birth Safety Act**  
**Integrate CPMs into our healthcare system.**

**SD Docs for Midwives**  
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