

# COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## Use of Electronic Communications Informed Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (the client), confirm that I am aware of the following conditions, risks, and instructions when using electronic communications including email, fax, text or instant messaging, social media, website and videoconferencing, e.g. Skype and FaceTime:

### 1. Conditions for Using Electronic Communications

- a. Use of electronic communications between me and my midwife and/or team of midwives does not replace an in person prenatal, labour or postpartum visit and will not be used for any emergencies or time-sensitive matters.
- b. While every attempt will be made to respond in a timely fashion to my electronic communication, a guarantee of a specific response time by my midwife and/or team of midwives is not possible.
- c. If a response is expected and has not been received within a reasonable time, I may need to follow up to ensure the intended recipient received the communication.
- d. For urgent matters, I am advised to page the on call midwife or care provider.
- e. Electronic communications concerning treatment or diagnosis will likely be transcribed, printed and/or scanned and made part of my medical record. Only authorized individuals such as other health care practitioners that are part of my health care team or staff and billing personnel may have access to these communications.
- f. The midwife and/or team of midwives involved in my care may send electronic communications in order to facilitate the coordination of my care. This information will not be sent to third parties including family members without my prior written consent, except as required or authorized by law.
- g. Electronic communications will not be used to communicate sensitive medical personal information such as mental health issues, substance abuse, or sexually transmitted disease.
- h. The midwife and/or team of midwives and midwifery office staff will use reasonable means to protect the security and confidentiality of information sent and received using electronic communications.
- i. I am required to inform my midwife and/or team of midwives of any types of information I do not want sent through electronic communications.

### 2. Risks of Using Electronic Communications

- a. Security and confidentiality of electronic communications cannot be guaranteed and despite efforts to protect the privacy and security of all electronic communications, it is not possible to completely secure the information.
- b. Use of electronic communications increases the risk of sensitive information being disclosed to third parties.
- c. Online services may inspect and keep electronic communications passing through their system and may have a legal right to do so.
- d. Whenever electronic communications occur, there is a risk of introducing malware into a computer system, potentially damaging and disrupting the security settings.
- e. Information sent through electronic communications can be forwarded, stored, circulated and changed without knowledge or permission from the client, midwife or midwifery office.
- f. Back-up copies may still exist on a computer system although the sender and recipient have deleted copies of electronic communications.
- g. All forms of electronic communications may be disclosed in a court order or in accordance with a duty to report.
- h. Skype or FaceTime may increase the risk of interception compared to other forms of videoconferencing.
- i. There is an increased risk for emails, text messages, and instant messages to be received by unintended and unknown recipients as these forms of electronic communications can more easily be misdirected.

