

**Constance Rock** and her partners are Direct-Entry Midwives, licensed by the California Medical Board and Certified Professional Midwives, certified by the North American Registry of Midwives. The following description is an excerpt from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midwifery>

## **The Definition of Midwifery and Direct-Entry Midwifery**

**Midwifery** is the term traditionally used to describe the art of assisting a woman through childbirth. In the modern context, this term is used to describe the activities of those health care providers who are experts in women's health care including giving prenatal care to expecting mothers. They attend the birth of the infant and provide postpartum care to the mother and her infant. Practitioners of midwifery are known as midwives, a term used in reference to both women and men (the term means "with woman").

Midwives are autonomous practitioners who are specialists in normal pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum. They generally strive to help women have a healthy pregnancy and natural birth experience. Midwives are also primary care givers providing general women's health care. Midwives are trained to recognize and deal with deviations from the norm. Obstetricians, in contrast, are specialists in illness related to childbearing and in surgery. The two professions can be complementary, but often are at odds because obstetricians are taught to "actively manage" labor, while midwives are taught not to intervene unless necessary.

Midwives refer to obstetricians when a woman requires care beyond her or his areas of expertise. In many jurisdictions, these professions work together to provide care to childbearing women. In others, only the midwife is available to provide care. Midwives are trained to handle certain situations that are considered abnormal, including breech birth and posterior position, using non-invasive techniques.

According to the International Confederation of Midwives, the World Health Organization and the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics:

A midwife is a person who, having been regularly admitted to a midwifery educational program that is duly recognized in the country in which it is located, has successfully completed the prescribed course of studies in midwifery and has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practice midwifery. The educational program may be an apprenticeship, a formal university program, or a combination.

The midwife is recognized as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labor and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife's own responsibility and to provide care for the infant. This care includes preventive measures, the promotion of normal birth, the detection of

complications in mother and child, accessing of medical or other appropriate assistance and the carrying out of emergency measures.

The midwife has an important task in health counseling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and community. This involves antenatal education and preparation for parenthood and extends to women's health, sexual or reproductive health and childcare.

A midwife may practice in any setting including in the home, birth centers, hospitals, or clinics.

### **Direct-Entry Midwives**

A direct-entry midwife is educated in the discipline of midwifery in a program or path that does not also require her to become educated as a nurse. Direct-entry midwives learn midwifery through self-study, apprenticeship, a midwifery school, or a college- or university-based program distinct from the discipline of nursing. A direct-entry midwife is trained to provide the Midwifery Model of Care to healthy women and newborns throughout the childbearing cycle primarily in out-of-hospital settings.

Under the umbrella of "direct-entry midwife" are several types of midwives:

A **Certified Professional Midwife** (CPM) is a knowledgeable, skilled and professional independent midwifery practitioner who has met the standards for certification set by the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM) and is qualified to provide the midwives model of care. The CPM is the only US credential that requires knowledge about and experience in out-of-hospital settings. At present, there are approximately 900 CPMs practicing in the US.

A **Licensed Midwife** is a midwife who is licensed to practice in a particular state. Currently, licensure for direct-entry midwives is available in 24 states.

For info on the California Medical Board's Licensed Midwifery Practice Act follow this link:

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=bpc&group=02001-03000&file=2505-2521>