



HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY	
TITLE: Position statement clarification of roles involved in the Department of Health and Community Services (DHCS) Home Birth Service	
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 2006	REVIEW DATE: June 2008
BOARD: Nursing and Midwifery Board of the Northern Territory	

Preamble

All members of the public are entitled to receive care and services from suitably qualified and registered practitioners wherever that care is provided.

Midwifery is a restricted practice area. This means that only registered nurses who are authorised to practise midwifery, or midwives may practise midwifery.

Professional indemnity

All nurses and midwives who are registered in the Northern Territory must have a professional indemnity arrangement in place when they are practising in the Northern Territory. This is a requirement of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*.

Midwives who are contracted by the Northern Territory Home Birth Service are indemnified by the Northern Territory government.

From time to time midwives may work along side the Home Birth Service Midwife when they are seeking to learn the role so that they may also enter into a contractual relationship with the Northern Territory Home Birth Service. In this situation the “learner” midwife does not have any indemnity cover and they must always work under the direct supervision of the Home Birth Service Midwife and at the direction of the Home Birth Service Midwife.

However if an emergency situation arises the “learner” midwife would be covered by virtue of section 128 of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*.

Support persons

Very often support persons will be present during the labour and at the home birth. Support persons may have professional qualifications, for example nursing, physiotherapy or medicine, they may be a student in a health program, for example medical student, midwifery student, nursing student, or they may be a family friend or relative.

If an emergency situation arises support persons may be called upon to assist the Home Birth Service Midwife. Section 128 of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004* provides protection to the support persons, thereby offering indemnity for their actions.