



Birthingway College of Midwifery

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Spring 2022 Informed Choice for Participating in Clinical Training During COVID-19

Dear Students,

The intent of this document is to provide guidance and information about options for navigating clinical training as we continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize that guidelines and local situations can change rapidly. We strongly recommend that you monitor and follow recommendations on the [CDC website](#), as well as local and state health departments and midwifery professional organizations, for up to date information regarding safety and public health precautions.

Current Legal and Safety Status

As of September 30, 2021, all healthcare providers in the State of Oregon, including students, must either be fully vaccinated or undergo weekly testing for COVID. Other states may have similar requirements.

While vaccination does greatly decrease your risk of serious illness or death from the virus, it is still possible to contract and spread COVID as a vaccinated individual. Mask use is still required in indoor public settings in the State of Oregon and in many other states, though this law is scheduled to expire in Oregon on March 12, 2022. The CDC also still strongly recommends wearing masks indoors, physically distancing, and avoiding large and/or tightly spaced groups. Vaccinated and asymptomatic people CAN and DO spread the virus.

Students considering providing care during this pandemic should consider their level of experience and whether their presence will be helpful to their preceptor. Students should also think about their own and their family's health risk and the potential of becoming a vector when making their decision. If they do choose to provide care, students should adhere to all PPE recommendations including use of masks, gloves, and frequent handwashing with soap and water.

Current recommendations are NOT to provide care to anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms, even mild ones. If a client is having symptoms of COVID-19, then the client should contact their primary health care provider so that the provider can assess whether in-person treatment is necessary and a referral to the hospital is warranted. Preceptors and students should not provide services to clients if the preceptor or student shows any symptoms of potential infection with coronavirus, even mild ones, or have had any presumptive exposure.

Individual preceptors may create more stringent requirements for their practices.

This is still a new virus for humans to cope with, which means that we do not have population-level immunity developed yet. It is not "just like the flu," being both more contagious and more deadly than influenza. Being young is not a protection. Students who choose to continue to provide in-person care must be aware that Birthingway does not have the ability to protect them from exposure.

Clinical Training

As of June 1, 2021, “NARM will no longer allow virtual clinicals to apply to the Continuity of Care clinical requirements for CPM candidates which they previously allowed. For each Continuity of Care Client between March 1, 2020 and June 1, 2021: one prenatal in the final trimester and one postpartum done anytime between 24 hours and six weeks post birth. Guidelines for documentation are available at [NARM.org](https://www.narm.org).” All other clinical requirements for NARM certification remain unchanged.

Currently, Birthingway WILL ALLOW students to count virtual prenatal and postpartum appointments as direct client care for Clinical Training Credits (CTC) IF they are a full participant in the appointment. All labor, birth, and immediate postpartum care must be provided in person for the experience to count for either NARM or Birthingway graduation requirements.

While we do not expect this will be a problem for students in the Portland metro area, many students are finding it difficult to find in-person NRP courses. For this reason, NARM will accept the verification of passing the NRP Essentials (Lessons 1-4) exam without the hands-on class until January 1, 2023. The CPR requirement is still in effect and requires the full course (must include BLS if taking only NRP Essentials 1-4). You can find more information about this at [narm.org](https://www.narm.org).

While it is tempting to skirt requirements during times of stress and provider shortages, Birthingway is clear that preceptors and students must continue to adhere to all current policies regarding supervision. In addition, preceptors must not penalize students for choosing not to attend clients in-person.

Points of Understanding

- Birthingway does not require students to travel or to provide any clinical care during this time of increased risk from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As a healthcare worker, you are under increased risk for contracting COVID-19. Birthingway is not liable for any outcome or expenses of students who might become infected with COVID-19 as a result of providing clinical care.
- We ask that all students in clinical training take a moment to assess the possible risk to yourself and your loved ones and to discuss these and other safety issues with your preceptor.
- During this pandemic, you are still required to adhere to your scope of practice as a midwifery student, as outlined by Birthingway, including requirements for direct supervision, and by the regulations in the state where you are practicing.
- You have the choice not to participate in Clinical Training this term. Please connect with your advisor about taking a Leave of Absence if you choose to stop your clinical training due to the pandemic.
- Birthingway staff are available if you have questions.

Wishing you continued health and well-being,

Holly Scholles
President

Heather Hack-Sullivan
Midwifery Program Coordinator