



Northern Midwifery (CoP) Terms of Reference (TOR)

Purpose

The Northern Maternal Child Network (NMCN) is a network that provides leadership, support and coordination for the planning and delivery of perinatal and newborn health services in both the Northeast and Northwest Regions of Ontario ([Ontario Health, 2023](#)).

The Northern Midwifery Community of Practice, established within the NMCN, provides a collaborative and supportive forum for midwives across Northern Ontario to connect, share knowledge, strengthen practice, and advance equitable, culturally safe, and sustainable midwifery care reflective of Northern, rural, remote, and Indigenous community realities. The Community of Practice aims to foster leadership, advocacy, education, and system collaboration while supporting local birth options and improving maternal and newborn care across the North.

Objectives

- Strengthen a unified Northern midwifery identity and collective voice through collaboration, advocacy, and shared communication across rural, remote, and Northern communities.
- Advocate for equitable access to midwifery and community-based birth options across Northern Ontario, including the preservation and expansion of low-risk local birth.
- Support the restoration of midwifery services, and choice of birthplace for Indigenous communities.
- Foster a supportive community of practice that promotes peer connection, mentorship, leadership development, and knowledge exchange reflective of Northern care realities.
- Support the development and ongoing growth of the Community of Practice as a sustainable, member-driven forum for Northern midwifery collaboration, learning, and system engagement.
- Co-develop and share standards, guidelines, and practice approaches that are practical, adaptable, inclusive and responsive to the geographic, logistical, and clinical realities of Northern practice.
- Enhance education, training, and workforce capacity by supporting ongoing professional development and strengthening perinatal and reproductive care knowledge in underserved communities.
- Build collaborative relationships with local, provincial and national partners to advance Northern midwifery priorities and strengthen representation in system-level planning and decision-making.
- Support the sharing of communications, updates, and resources among midwifery colleagues across Northern Ontario to strengthen connection and consistency in practice.
- Create an inclusive, culturally safe and respectful space for members to share experiences, challenges, innovations, and ideas.
- Collaborate with the Northern Maternal Child Network (NMCN) to support mutual reporting, communication, and ongoing knowledge translation across regional and provincial initiatives.



Guiding Principles

Members of the Community of Practice commit to fostering an inclusive, respectful, collaborative, and psychologically safe environment that supports shared learning and open dialogue. Members will:

- Create an inclusive and supportive environment where ideas, experiences, and challenges can be shared openly while maintaining confidentiality and trust.
- Ensure intersectionality informs discussions, decision-making, and approaches to care and advocacy.
- Commit to active participation and meaningful engagement in meetings, discussions, and collaborative activities.
- Speak from personal experience and perspective while recognizing and valuing diverse lived realities and professional backgrounds.
- Approach conversations with openness, curiosity, and a willingness to learn from one another.
- Respect differing viewpoints and engage in discussions with professionalism, collaboration, and mutual understanding.
- Contribute to collaborative problem-solving and the co-development of solutions that reflect Northern realities and priorities.

Membership

Membership of the Northern Midwifery Community of Practice will reflect the diversity of midwifery practice and perinatal care across Northern Ontario. Participation is open to individuals and organizations with an interest in strengthening equitable, culturally safe, and sustainable midwifery care in Northern, rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Membership may include:

- Registered Midwives in Northern Ontario
- Indigenous Midwives
- NMCN Representatives
- Additional subject matter experts, community representatives, or guests invited based on agenda topics and priorities

Members are expected to:

- Participate actively in meetings and collaborative activities
- Contribute knowledge, experiences, and resources relevant to Northern midwifery care
- Uphold the Guiding Principles and foster a respectful, supportive environment
- Support shared learning, collaboration, and knowledge translation across the region

The Community of Practice may be co-chaired by representatives identified by the membership and supported administratively by the Northern Maternal Child Network (NMCN).



Meetings

The CoP will meet [enter once decided]. Additional meetings may be added on an ad-hoc basis as needed. The frequency of meetings can be revised at any time as determined by the majority of members. Meetings will be held virtually however members may choose to meet in-person on occasion at their discretion.

Chair

The CoP will be composed of two co-chairs. Any member of the CoP can be nominated or volunteer for the role of chairperson. The members as needed will determine the process for nominations and voting. The term of this role will be a **1 year term**. The rotation of the role of co-chair among all members is encouraged to enable shared leadership and accountability, engagement, and fresh perspectives.

The co-chair will be a member of the NMCN staff (until the CoP is established) and will be responsible for ensuring administrative support for the community of practice. The co-chairs will be responsible for planning and facilitating any virtual or in-person meetings and ensuring follow up on any actions items as they arise. One co-chair will be designated to represent the members of the community of practice at the NMCN Maternal-Newborn Committee.

Accountability

The chair of the CoP is responsible for reporting to the Steering Committee of the Northern Maternal Child Network business within the CoP.

Decision Making

Quorum is set at 50% + 1 of membership for decisions.

Decisions will be made by consensus if possible; if consensus is not achieved, then a majority-based decision will be made. If voting is required, members are entitled to one vote, which should include the opportunity for absentee members to provide input.

TOR Document Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 2 years.