

What are monitrice services?

Oregon licensed direct entry midwives who are providing monitrice services advertise that they provide labor support and labor assessments to help a woman decide when to go to the place where she will give birth. Some of the clinical skills purportedly rendered under the title of a monitrice include vaginal exams to assess cervical dilation, taking a laboring woman's vitals, and monitoring for fetal heart tones. Monitrice services may also include prenatal and postpartum visits and care.

The State Board of Direct Entry Midwifery recognizes that monitrice services can be of great benefit to a pregnant or laboring woman.

Can a licensed direct entry midwife practice monitrice services?

A licensed direct entry midwife may provide midwifery services, regardless of whether those services are called by another name, including the name of a monitrice.

Is a licensed direct entry midwife who provides monitrice services subject to the laws that govern direct entry midwives?

Yes, a licensed direct entry midwife who provides services within her or his scope of licensure, regardless of whether those services are called by another name, including the name of a monitrice, is subject to the laws that govern direct entry midwives. The laws that govern direct entry midwives are valuable to the practice; the integrity of the profession and the safety of the public are grounded in the standards of care at which all midwives are required to practice. Licensed direct entry midwives who provide, for compensation, the valuable monitrice and non monitrice services that are also direct entry midwifery services need to maintain records and provide those services consistent with the Oregon laws that govern direct entry midwifery practice.

However, if a licensed direct entry midwife provides additional services that are not midwifery services, then other laws may also apply. For instance, services that a licensed midwife provides that are not midwifery services may fall within the practice of medicine. The practice of medicine is regulated by the Oregon Medical Board.

An example

Question: A woman wants to have prenatal assessments at home, as well as labor and deliver her baby at home. The woman has had four cesarean sections prior to her current pregnancy. The woman consults with a licensed direct entry midwife in an effort to establish services. The licensee correctly tells the woman that she cannot provide midwifery services. The woman asks the midwife if she will provide monitrice services if the woman agrees to go to the hospital to deliver her baby when advised to do so by the midwife. May the licensed direct entry midwife provide monitrice services to this woman?

Answer: The licensed direct entry midwife will be in violation of a midwifery rule if she provides direct entry midwifery services to this woman. A woman with four previous cesarean sections is considered an absolute risk under OAR 332-025-0021(2)(CC), this is true even if the licensee is acting as a monitrice. Licensed direct entry midwives must maintain records and provide services consistent with the Oregon laws that govern the practice.

Are unlicensed individuals who practice monitrice services subject to the laws that govern direct entry midwives?

Yes, an individual who provides direct entry midwifery services for compensation, regardless of whether those services are called by another name, including the name of a monitrice, is subject to the laws that govern direct entry midwives. If the person is not licensed, then the person is subject to the Board's jurisdiction for providing services without a license.

In addition, an individual who provides monitrice services without a direct entry midwifery license may also be subject to other laws regulating health professions. For instance, services may fall within the practice of medicine. The practice of medicine is under the authority of the Oregon Medical Board. ORS 677.325 (authority to seek a court injunction for practicing medicine without a medical license); ORS 677.990(2) (it is a class C felony to practice medicine without a license).

Note this practice clarification does not address traditional midwifery.

Important Note: The Board and HLO do not provide personal legal advice to licensees or members of the public. The information provided here is specific to only those questions asked. Even slight changes in the scope or content of the question or matter may change the application of the above information in a different situation. Please consult your own attorney for legal advice regarding Oregon laws and administrative rules.