

# Informed Consent Agreement

*This is a 2-page understanding and agreement between Center for Natural Birth or their assigned agents and the undersigned. Please initial each page where indicated at the bottom, and sign the last page to indicate your understanding of the information provided herein.*

We, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following:

## Statement of Midwife's Philosophy

The midwives of *Center for Natural Birth* believe that childbirth is a normal and natural event which, when left to proceed without *unnecessary* intervention, will result in an uncomplicated end in most cases. Our job is to support the birthing family in the journey through the childbearing year by monitoring that natural process. A hallmark of the services we provide is the significant time and attention we spend developing a strong relationship with your family and educating as needed. With nurturing care and adequate knowledge, families will usually feel comfortable and peaceful with their birth plans and attendants, so that the birth may progress as smoothly as possible. By establishing a close bond with your family, we believe that you are more likely to discuss important issues with us, and we hope to be more able to recognize problems if they arise.

You will be provided our contact numbers, and as much as is within our control, we agree to be on call for you 24 hours a day from 37 weeks through 48 hours postpartum. We strive to be accessible to you at all other times, though we cannot guarantee availability outside of this agreement. For non-emergency discussions, please try to call between 8am and 6pm. In an emergency, if we are unreachable, we advise you to call or go to the closest hospital.

Childbirth is a family-centered event; the midwife's role is to enhance rather than usurp the family's power and unity. We believe the parents should have the experience they desire. However, situations involving complications that in our judgment cannot be handled safely at home must be referred to persons trained in obstetrics.

Families must maintain full responsibility for their own health care and for the outcomes of their births. We will assist with information on nutrition, exercise and childbirth education. Homebirth families must take extra responsibility in this area since technological assistance is not immediately available as it may be for those birthing in the hospital. You have the legal right to refuse any testing or treatment; you may be required to sign additional forms for any care received or refused. To offer our best care, we must work within certain guidelines that help us determine optimal health and safety for mother and baby.

## Prenatal Care

In believing strongly in preventive health care, we know that attentive prenatal care is the best way to avoid or recognize complications. Regular visits are made monthly through 28 weeks of pregnancy, biweekly until 36 weeks, then weekly until the birth. Additional visits may be scheduled as needed. Each visit averages one hour in duration but may be adjusted to suit each family's needs. A prenatal home visit is scheduled at approximately 36 weeks.

## Labor and Delivery Care

We will provide as much support as you need, or we will allow you to labor alone as a family with regular attention as necessary to monitor that all is progressing safely. We will arrive at the birth within a reasonable amount of time after you request our presence, and we will stay an average of four hours after the birth to ensure mother and baby are stable. We welcome your other children's presence; they *must* have an additional caregiver present. You may choose to invite other supportive guests, but the majority of women labor most effectively in a calm and quiet atmosphere. In the case of transport to a hospital, your midwife and/or her assistant will help you get settled in and support you as you both decide would be best, but they will be legally limited to emotional and informational support.

## Postpartum Care

Phone visits are made the following day and throughout the first week. A home visit is made within 24 hours and 72 hours postpartum and regular postpartum office visits are scheduled throughout the first 2-6 weeks. Additional visits will be scheduled as needed. We encourage you to have household help after the birth; we can provide you with referrals to postpartum doula services upon request. In the event of hospital transport, you may choose to continue postpartum care with us.

## Newborn Care

Although we will perform routine newborn and postnatal examinations, we cannot provide the same services as a pediatrician. We expect you to interview and choose a pediatrician during your pregnancy and to take the baby for a routine physician evaluation within the first week, sooner if there is cause. The State of California requires that your baby receive a newborn screening blood test, which we will perform in the first week; we will provide you with this information during your pregnancy.

## Fees

Fees are clearly outlined in the Financial Agreement you receive and sign upon contract of care. Your agreement to complete payment to us equals our agreement to continue care for you, thus we reserve the right to discontinue care at any time if we do not receive payment as contracted. By signing this document or the Financial Agreement, you grant permission for us to release your medical records if requested by your insurance company in the review of claims and grant assignment of payment to us from your insurance company. Appropriate overpayment, if any, will be refunded within a reasonable timeframe.

Initials \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Philosophy and Responsibility of Parents

We have chosen to have a homebirth based on what we believe to be a thorough examination of the choices available to us. We have discussed our pregnancy care and birth options between ourselves, with physicians and other knowledgeable people to the extent we think necessary. After considering our choices, we have chosen Center for Natural Birth to assist us in our homebirth. Our midwife Center for Natural Birth has detailed the information on the previous page and has discussed with us her philosophy and experience. Before signing this agreement, we have conversed with each other privately and with our midwife and have had ample opportunity to ask questions of any person we feel necessary to consult. In addition to agreeing with the information on the previous two pages, we also fully understand the following:

- We believe that childbirth is a natural and generally safe process. We know that it is impossible to provide the same type of technological care in a homebirth environment that occurs in a hospital setting. We are aware of some of the problems that can arise during childbirth in any setting, including but not limited to: placenta previa, placental abruption, malpresentations of the baby, prolapsed cord, fetal distress, meconium aspiration, infection, eclampsia/toxemia, shoulder dystocia, hemorrhage, birth defects, genetic disorders and death.
- Various tests such as ultrasound and amniocentesis are available to us to possibly detect abnormalities or other problems. The midwives of Center for Natural Birth are not experts in this type of care, and the advisability of such tests should be discussed with medical personnel.
- As no medical malpractice insurance is available to providers of homebirth services, the midwives of Center for Natural Birth carry no medical malpractice insurance. In cases of dispute, we agree to binding arbitration and mediation as a means to resolution.
- My midwife has explained that while she believes that having physician affiliation provides optimal care for the pregnant woman, she holds no such relationship with a specific physician, because although California law requires licensed midwives to have supervising physicians, physicians in the state of California refuse to officially supervise licensed midwives. We are encouraged to seek and maintain our own back-up physician to facilitate medical care in case our pregnancy or birth requires medical attention. My midwife will provide us with physician referrals at our request but offers no guarantee that they will agree to offer assistance to homebirth families.
- It may become necessary to transfer the mother and/or baby to the hospital prenatally, during the birth or postpartum, and we may choose to do so at any time. If prenatal transfer of care is required, and if we have no preferred physician, Center for Natural Birth will refer us to UCSD perinatal clinic for assignment of a physician or to Kaiser Zion. If your midwife deems it necessary to transport mother and/or child at any time, we agree to go upon her request. We understand that our midwife recommends transfer to UCSD Hospital Hillcrest as they have publicly expressed willingness to accept midwife clients into care. Hospitals are legally required to accept emergency transfers of pregnant women or newborns, and in the event of an emergency transport, we will proceed to the hospital closest to our home. We have the right to choose any hospital for a non-emergency transfer, and we agree to inform Center for Natural Birth of those choices and to have directions available prior to the birth.

We, \_\_\_\_\_ (mother) and \_\_\_\_\_ (partner), willfully enter into this midwife-client relationship as outlined in this two-page document entitled *Informed Consent Agreement* and the two-page *Financial Agreement*. We understand and agree with the information contained herein and have made copies of this document for our records. By signing below, we consent for Center for Natural Birth or their agents to provide any care she deems necessary to the pregnant woman and her child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Midwife Signature, CPM, LM

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mother Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Partner Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Initials \_\_\_\_\_