

The Midwife.

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD.

Questions have recently been raised concerning the position of midwives in cases in which a medical practitioner has accepted responsibility to provide maternity medical services within the National Health Service. The Secretary of the Central Midwives Board recapitulates the position of domiciliary midwives in these circumstances.

1.—The Board regards the midwife as acting as a midwife unless *all* the conditions laid down in Rule E.20 are fulfilled. If they are all fulfilled then she is deemed to be acting as a maternity nurse. Hence the acceptance by the medical practitioner of responsibility for the provision of maternity medical services and the carrying out of ante-natal care by him does not affect the position of the midwife who is acting as such, but if the doctor has stated specifically that he wishes to be summoned at the onset of labour and that he proposes to deliver the woman himself she is in that case acting as a maternity nurse.

2.—The midwife must call in medical aid in accordance with the Board's circular of the 29th June, 1948 whenever she is acting as a midwife and she must use the medical aid form laid down in rule E.62(b), of which she must send one copy to the local supervising authority. This copy is required by the local supervising authority as a record of the calling of medical aid at a specific time in case of subsequent enquiry or penal proceedings.

3.—It can be no part of the midwife's duties or responsibility to ascertain the correct source of remuneration to a medical practitioner in particular cases. It has hitherto been administratively convenient for the medical aid form to be used as a basis for payment to medical practitioners for answering medical aid calls, but since practitioners providing maternity medical services are remunerated by the local executive council whereas other medical practitioners answering emergency calls are remunerated by local supervising authorities the form will not always be able to be used for this purpose. In the latest edition of books of medical aid forms the note on the reverse concerning payment has been deleted and if authorities are continuing to use up their stocks of previous editions it is suggested that this note should be cancelled.

Finally if the midwife is in any doubt she should always regard herself as acting as a practising midwife and not as a maternity nurse in order that she may fulfil her legal obligations.

CLEARANCE OF THE MIDWIVES ROLL.

The roll of non-practising midwives contains the names and addresses of some 56,000 midwives. In order to bring this roll up to date the Board is circularising all midwives whose names appear thereon, in accordance with Section 3(2) of the Midwives Act, 1926, which reads as follows:—

"The Central Midwives Board may from time to time by registered letter addressed to any woman whose name is included in the roll of midwives at her address as appearing therein, inquire of her whether she has ceased practice or has changed her residence; and if within a period of six months from the sending of such a letter no answer is received thereto, the Board may erase the name of that person from the roll and may cancel her certificate, but without prejudice to the power of the Board subsequently to restore the name to the roll and to re-issue the certificate if it appears proper so to do."

This clearance of the roll was only commenced in July of this year, and letters are being dispatched alphabetically, but more than one third of those so far dispatched have been returned to the Board through the Dead Letter Office. If any non-practising midwife has failed to notify her change of name and/or address, she is advised to do so immediately; notification of change of name should be accompanied by the marriage certificate or other official document, which will be returned to the midwife by registered post as soon as the necessary alterations have been made on the Midwives Roll. *Failure to notify the Board of any change of name and/or address may mean that the clearing roll letter will be returned to the Board through the Dead Letter Office, and the name of the midwife concerned will then be removed from the roll after the six months' period mentioned in the Act has elapsed. Once a name is so removed, formal application for the restoration of her name to the roll would be required and the midwife might have to undergo a period of further training before her application could be granted.

In many replies to the letters so far dispatched the Board has been asked why it proposes to remove the recipient's name from the roll. The circular letter sent out by the Board under this procedure does not, of course, in any way imply that the recipient is compelled to have her name removed from the roll; it merely gives her the opportunity of having her name removed if she wishes it. No name will be erased from the roll unless the midwife states that she wishes it or unless no answer at all is received by the Board within six months of the date of dispatch of the circular letter.

R. J. FENNEY, *Secretary*.

APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS.

The Minister of Health, in exercise of his powers under section 3 of the Midwives Act, 1902, and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, hereby approves the said amendments in the form set out in the schedule hereto.

This Instrument may be cited as the Midwives (Amendment) Rules (No. 2), Approval Instrument, 1948.

SCHEDULE

CENTRAL MIDWIVES BOARD

The Midwives Acts, 1902 to 1936

The Central Midwives Board, in the exercise of their powers under the Midwives Acts, 1902 to 1936, hereby make the following amendments to the Rules framed under the said Acts:—

1.—In Rule 16 (f) of section B of the aforesaid Rules, the words "by health authorities" shall be deleted.

2.—In Rule 19 of section B, the words from "Such applications" to the end of the Rule shall be deleted.

3.—(1) In part (c) (1) of the Schedule to section C, there shall be added after the words "The types of local authorities and the chief health functions of each" the words "especially those of Local Health Authorities."

The words "Maternity and Child Welfare Nurses" shall be deleted and there shall be substituted therefor the words "Home Nurses."

The words "Relieving Officers" shall be deleted.

(2) In part (c) (4) of the said Schedule, the words from "The provision of hospitals" to "The work of maternity

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