

(Excerpts from the Business 413 course at Midwives College of Utah)

SETTING YOUR FEES

When you are just getting started, it can be daunting to try and decide what you are worth and many midwives end up selling themselves short. There are a couple of ways to go about determining your financial worth.

On the Medicare website, they have their fee schedule posted. Medicare is considered the bottom of the barrel as far as reimbursement rates are concerned, but even commercial companies use Medicare rates as part of their calculations to figure their own reimbursement rates. You can go to their website, type in a procedure code and your zip code, and they will tell you what the Medicare reimbursement rate is for your area. You definitely do NOT want to set your fees any lower than Medicare rates! Most medical and dental practices will set their fees anywhere from 150-200% of what Medicare reimburses and this is what I recommend for midwives. One of our clients actually did this with every service she offered and she had her fees down to the penny. Here is the Medicare website.

http://www.cms.hhs.gov/pfslookup/02_PFSsearch.asp?agree=yes&next=Accept

Click the “Accept” button at the bottom of the first page (sometimes you have to click it twice), then click “Single HCPC Code” and “Pricing Info” on the next page. Enter the code you are inquiring about in the “HCPC” box, set Modifier to “All Modifiers” and then choose your locality from the list. There will be several prices come up, you are looking for the “Non-facility price”.

Look up the following ten procedure codes for your area on the Medicare website. How much does Medicare reimburse for each service? Your fees should be 150-200% of what Medicare would pay (we all know they don’t really pay for direct-entry midwives).

- 99205—Comprehensive initial office visit
- 99204—Complex initial office visit
- 99203—Detailed initial office visit
- 99215—Comprehensive return office visit
- 99214—Complex return office visit
- 99213—Detailed return office visit
- 99350—Comprehensive home visit, established patient
- 99349—Complex home visit, established patient
- 59400—Global OB care (there will only be the ‘facility price’ for this code)
- 99461—Initial newborn care

Another way to determine your fees is to find out what other midwives or doctors in your area are charging. This can be a bit tricky, as professionals aren’t supposed to discuss their fees (in some circles that’s called ‘fee setting’ and it can get you into trouble). But with some careful snooping and tactful questions to the right people, you will be able to find out what others are charging for maternity care.