



For Immediate Release

BC Midwives Approve New Agreement with Province

Final ratification to be confirmed by May 31, 2007

Vancouver, BC (March 30, 2007) – The Midwives Association of B.C. has approved a new tentative agreement negotiated between the MABC and the Ministry of Health.

Covering the period of April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2010, the agreement provides compensation increases in line with other health care sector contracts reached to date.

“Midwives are pleased that their contribution to maternity care in this province is valued by the provincial government,” says MABC president Elizabeth Andrew. “This agreement provides fair compensation to help retain and attract midwives to the profession and gives more B.C. women the option to obtain comprehensive, cost-effective maternity care.”

Parties have also agreed to an on-going dialogue to discuss issues addressing the delivery of maternity care.

All voting members of the MABC are eligible to vote on the agreement. Ratification of the agreement is required by the Government by May 31. A simple majority by voting members is required to approve the agreement.

Midwives provide comprehensive maternity care to women having low risk pregnancies - spending 45-60 minutes on each prenatal appointment, continuous one-to-one care during labour and delivery, making visits to hospital or home several times over the first week postpartum and continuing care until six weeks after delivery.

Midwives are self-employed professionals working on a course-for-care payment model. Under this system, the Medical Services Plan pays midwives an established fee of five payments per women throughout pregnancy, birth and postpartum care. The percentage of a midwife's gross income that is expended on overhead (office rental, equipment, insurance, business licenses, continuing education, staff salaries, travel expenses) is an average of 40%. The remaining income is then subject to income taxes.

There are pressures in B.C.'s maternity care delivery system with a high attrition rate among doctors and fewer obstetricians and anesthesiologists available in rural communities, midwives deliver a cost-effective and critical component to the health care system.

Midwives deliver 6.6% of babies born in B.C. each year (2,639 in 2005). There are 108 midwives currently practicing in B.C.; each one is registered and able to care for 40 clients a year.

Midwives are regulated under the health professions act and have been publicly funded since January 1998. 2007 marks the 10th Anniversary of this regulation. **May 5, 2007 is International Day of the Midwife** and is observed in over 50 nations around the world. This year's theme is: MIDWIVES REACH OUT TO WOMEN - WHEREVER THEY LIVE.

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For more information, see support documents, which are available for download at www.bcmidwives.com or upon request:

- BENEFITS OF MIDWIFERY TO THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM – A Case for Midwifery
- MIDWIFERY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA Fact Sheet

Interview opportunities available with midwifery experts and MABC members in Vancouver, Victoria, rural BC.

Press release on ratification of new contract to be released after 30 April 2007