



For Immediate Release

BC Midwives Ratify Three-Year Agreement

Vancouver, BC (April 16, 2007) – B.C. midwives have voted 100 per cent to ratify their new provincial agreement with the Ministry of Health.

“This agreement allows more women the ability to obtain comprehensive, cost-effective maternity care and provides midwives the opportunity to contribute to decisions being made about maternity care in B.C.,” says MABC president Elizabeth Andrew.

A total of 88 members cast their ballot. The agreement provides a general compensation increase of 10 per cent over three years, increase client maximum (from 40 to 60 per year) and targeted funding for educational and professional development programs.

As previously announced, the parties have also agreed to an on-going dialogue to discuss issues addressing the delivery of maternity care in B.C. which include rural midwifery, retention and mentoring.

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.

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.

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.

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