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Midwifery Service Comes to Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital

TRAIL – The addition of midwifery service gives expectant parents who access services at Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital more choices around how they bring their babies into the world.

“Anything we can do to add to the excellent services provided by our obstetricians and general physicians through our Family Obstetrics Clinic is great,” said Dr. Trudi Toews, KBRH Chief of Staff. “As part of the collaborative maternity care plan for our area, we’re very excited to add midwifery to the services we already provide.”

Registered Midwife Melanie Shields has practiced midwifery since 2004. Shields is originally from Melbourne, Australia and did her training at Monash University in Melbourne. Following her certification as a midwife, she brought her skills to a birth centre in Nunavut. She moved to Rossland with her family in 2006 and has been working as an RN in the maternity wing at KBRH.

“Midwifery can give expectant moms and dads additional continuity of care because I follow them throughout the pregnancy and for up to six weeks after birth,” Shields said. “I’m excited to be part of the team already providing obstetrics services to parents in Trail, Castlegar, Grand Forks and other communities that access KBRH.”

Registered Midwife Michelle Cameron will fill more of a supportive role to start, as she is expecting a baby of her own in the fall. Cameron has had a long-time interest in midwifery. She decided to enter the profession when she lived in Rossland and saw the need for the service in the greater Trail area. She has worked as a midwife in Surrey for the last three years, but was eager to return to the Kootenay Boundary.

“The women and families of this region have been asking for midwives at KBRH for years,” said Cameron. “Our presence in the community is due to their requests, as well as through the support Melanie and I have received by the obstetrical community. It’s very exciting to be a part of midwifery services spreading into rural communities.”

Shields and Cameron were granted hospital privileges on May 27. Midwives are licensed to do home and hospital births, and will work in partnership with physicians when appropriate. To access the new midwifery service, contact the KBRH Family Obstetrics Clinic at 250-364-5131.

One hundred and twenty-eight registered midwives are currently practising in British Columbia and midwifery has been a regulated health profession in B.C. since 1998. In the Kootenay Boundary, midwifery services are also well established in Nelson, with six midwives having privileges at Kootenay Lake Hospital.

In April, the provincial government announced new regulations allowing midwives to deliver a broader range of services to new and expectant mothers. These services include initiating induction and augmentation of labour, use of acupuncture for pain relief in labour and assisting medical doctors with C-sections. These specialized practices will be performed by midwives who have obtained additional education and certification.

For more information on the regulation of health professions in B.C., please visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/leg/.