

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Midwives

**British Columbia leads Canada in midwifery births;
Province is on target to achieve goal of 35% of births by 2020**

(Victoria, British Columbia - October 26, 2016) The Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) opens its 16th Annual Conference and Exhibit today in Victoria, British Columbia under the theme "Midwives Caring for Diverse Communities: Leadership and Collaboration".

British Columbia (BC) is leading the nation in midwife assisted births, at 21% of all births in the province. BC is on track to reach their goal of seeing 35% of births assisted by midwives by 2020. On Vancouver Island, midwives already assist at 35% of births. In BC, as in other provinces and territories, midwives work as autonomous, primary health care providers and offer choice of birthplace, informed choice and continuity of care-provider.

"It is inspiring to be in Victoria for our conference, where midwives are leading the country in numbers of midwife-assisted births. There are 1600 midwives in Canada, but in many parts, families still do not have access to midwifery care, such as in Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Yukon due to a lack of regulations or funding," states Emmanuelle Hébert, President of the Canadian Association of Midwives. "We hope that this conference is a wake-up call to provinces and territories that it is time to make midwifery care accessible to all communities in Canada."

"With 290 registered midwives practicing in our province, and growing, women and families in BC have greater access to a maternity care provider, particularly in rural, remote and First Nations communities," says Alixandra Bacon, President of the Midwives Association of British Columbia.

Global voices of midwifery and invited guests

The conference opens with a keynote address from Lesley Page, the President of the Royal College of Midwives in the United Kingdom. The Assistant Deputy Minister of Health, Ted Patterson, will be speaking on Thursday morning. Other keynote speakers include Madeleine Dion Stout, Dr. Raymond Devries and Elaine Carty. There will be a panel discussion on midwifery in British Columbia (morning of Thursday, October 27th).

CAM looks forward to welcoming midwives, maternity care providers and health researchers from across Canada and around the world, and would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to members of the British Columbia health services and medical communities.

The Canadian Association of Midwives is the national organization representing midwives and the profession of midwifery in Canada. CAM supports the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) as the voice of Aboriginal midwifery. The mission of CAM is to provide leadership and advocacy for midwifery as an autonomous, self-regulated, publicly funded and vital part of primary maternal and newborn care. CAM promotes the development of the profession in the public interest and contributes the midwifery perspective to the national health policy agenda.

The vision of the Canadian Association of Midwives is that midwifery is fundamental to maternal and newborn health services, and that everyone in Canada will have access to a midwife's care for themselves and their baby.

For more information about CAM/ACSF, visit our website at www.canadianmidwives.org.

For immediate media requests

Press passes available

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