



B.C. Midwives Seek To Alleviate Strains On Healthcare Crisis Amid New Negotiations with Ministry of Health

The Midwives Association of British Columbia start negotiations on Midwifery Service Agreement 2022-2025

VANCOUVER, B.C., September 21, 2022 - Last week, the Midwives Association of British Columbia (MABC) began negotiations on the Midwifery Service Agreement (MSA) 2022-2025 with the B.C. Ministry of Health. While details are being finalized from the Midwifery Service Agreement (MSA) 2019-2022, MABC seeks to play a larger role in addressing the healthcare crisis by prioritizing increased access to primary care. This includes access to essential sexual, reproductive and newborn services, while addressing equal pay, the increased costs of business and unpaid work for on-call time. With support and demand for midwifery services at an all time high, midwives are delivering primary care services to over 25% of birthing families in B.C.

“Our negotiations come at a pivotal time when British Columbia’s healthcare system is underwater,” says Lehe Spiegelman, president, Midwives Association of British Columbia and practicing midwife. “Midwives can do more to alleviate some of the pain points we’re experiencing across the province in primary healthcare. Priorities to be addressed through negotiation will facilitate relief for strained physicians by further building out team-based care, improve access to services in rural and remote communities, and deepen the commitment to reconciliation by increasing the capacity of service by Indigenous midwives. Midwives must have the infrastructure to confidently deliver excellent reproductive, sexual and newborn care across the province. Fair compensation and pay equity will demonstrate that the government of B.C. acknowledges the value that midwives bring to our health care system on a daily basis.”

Among the priorities for British Columbia midwives that will be discussed during negotiations, emphasis will be placed on the following:

- **Alleviating strains on healthcare** - Midwives are skilled and knowledgeable in primary care services and can help address shortages and increase access for rural, remote and Indigenous communities. Midwives bring skills as primary care providers to improve access for patients seeking regular pap exams, breast health checks, contraception and newborn care.
- **Equal pay for equal work** - B.C. has one of the largest gender pay gaps in Canada with women making, on average, approximately 20% less than men. Closing the gender pay gap, particularly in the health profession, must be a priority.
- **Unpaid Work** - Midwives are one of the only professional health groups without access to any form of funding for being on call. In the care of a midwife, a patient has access to a team on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. This equates to hundreds of



hours of unpaid on-call hours for each midwife.

“There is work to be done in achieving meaningful gains and further equity in our profession,” continues Spiegelman. “The Midwives Association of British Columbia is eager to continue our strong relationship and move forward together with the provincial government to ensure all midwives in the province receive critical infrastructure support and equitable compensation for their role as primary care providers. We are committed to collaborating closely with the Ministry of Health as we embark on this next negotiation.”

In December 2021, after two years of negotiation and arbitration, MABC was presented with their final arbitration result for the Midwifery Service Agreement (MSA) 2019-2022. This recent contract period, which was in effect until March 31, 2022, provides a promising future for the midwifery profession. The results included more funds for midwives across the critical basic needs for the profession, including parental leave, disability insurance program and retirement savings programs. These programs were not previously available to B.C. midwives. For the first time, this most recent contract period also acknowledged the government’s commitment to reconciliation with funding directly contributing to the growth of Indigenous Midwifery in B.C.

Learn more about the Midwives Association of British Columbia at bcmidwives.com.

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About the Midwives Association of British Columbia

The Midwives Association of British Columbia (MABC) is the professional association for midwives in B.C. The MABC promotes the profession of midwifery while advocating for the ongoing development and enhancement of its service. The MABC provides continuing education opportunities and professional services to over 400 midwives across the province, while supporting midwifery education programs. The MABC works with its members to ensure they provide skilled, trauma-informed, culturally-sensitive, patient-centered, evidence-based care and has been regulated under the health profession act since 1998.

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