



For Immediate Release
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BC leading Canada in midwife assisted births

Progress report shows more midwives are improving access to maternity care in rural, remote and First Nations communities in BC

Victoria, BC – A [progress report](#) released today by the Midwives Association of British Columbia (MABC) shows that strategic investments in midwifery care in BC are improving access to maternity care in rural, remote and First Nations communities, supporting better health outcomes for women and families and reducing health care costs.

“Registered midwives were involved in approximately 9,000 births in 2015, or 21 per cent of all births in our province,” said Alix Bacon, President of MABC. “British Columbia is now leading the nation in midwife assisted births, and in providing women and families more options to choose their maternity care provider.”

The progress report provides an update on the MABC’s [New Vision for Midwifery and Maternity Care](#), released in January 2014, which made a number of recommendations to bridge BC’s maternity care gap by fully integrating midwifery services into BC’s health care system and by increasing the number of midwife assisted births in BC to 35 per cent by 2020.

"It is great news that BC is leading the way in midwife-assisted births in Canada," said Health Minister Terry Lake. "Midwives are a valuable part of our health-care system, and through their expertise, provide women with more choices regarding pregnancy, labour and delivery."

“With 280 registered midwives practicing in our province, women and families in BC have greater access to a maternity care provider, particularly in rural, remote and First Nations communities,” said Bacon. “Since 2013, we have seen new midwifery practices open in places like Powell River, Hazelton and Old Massett on Haida Gwaii which provide families with more choice and options for maternity care closer to home.”

Key highlights from the progress report include:

- The number of midwives practicing in BC in 2015/16 has grown to 280, up by 71 midwives, exceeding MABC projections by 20%
- The number of new midwives now practicing in rural and First Nations communities has grown from 68 to 93.
- At 9,000, the number of midwife assisted births in 2015/16 has grown faster than expected, exceeding MABC projections by 62%

- The increase in midwife assisted births has resulted in savings to government of \$4.6 million, exceeding MABC projections by \$1.2 million to date

“By collaborating with the provincial government we have made significant progress in delivering better maternity care for BC’s women and families and new supports for our members,” said Bacon. “However, there is more work to be done to maximize the benefits of midwifery for BC families and our health care system.”

The progress report included four key recommendations to ensure BC’s midwives can provide greater access to maternity care in rural and underserved communities, including:

- Approve scope of practice changes as proposed by the College of Midwives of BC to support midwives to provide essential health care in underserved communities.
- Implement provincially funded alternative payment models in rural and remote communities to improve access to perinatal care, and support long term, sustainable midwifery practices.
- Improve the integration of midwives into health authorities to support collaborative, interdisciplinary, community and patient centered care.
- Include midwives in E-Health planning to ensure all maternity care is safely integrated at local, regional and provincial levels and fund midwives like other health care providers to access electronic medical records systems.

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About Midwifery

Registered midwives are primary maternity health care providers who are experts in low-risk pregnancy and birth. They have medical training that specializes in pregnancy, birth and postpartum care for mothers and babies. Midwifery is a safe, recognized and growing choice for maternity care in BC and around the world. Midwifery has been regulated in BC under the Health Professions Act since 1998. Midwives are university educated, their services are covered by MSP and are provided in both hospital and home settings.

About MABC

The MABC educates the public about midwifery care while supporting the growing number of midwives across the province. Registered midwives are funded as part of the health care system in BC and are experts in low-risk, low-intervention birth. With extensive training that focuses on pregnancy, birth and postpartum for both mom and baby, midwives are a safe and recognized choice for maternity care in BC, across Canada and around the world.

Media Contact:

Wendy Richmond, NATIONAL Public Relations
604-724-5489 cell / 604-691-7380 office
wrichmond@national.ca

