



Midwives Association of British Columbia

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE

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A New Vision for Midwifery and Maternity Care in British Columbia

MABC identifies need for increase in midwifery services

Vancouver, BC – Expanding the availability of midwifery in British Columbia by ensuring registered midwives attend 35 per cent of the births in the province by 2020 would increase access to maternity care in rural communities, improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs, according to a report released today by the Midwives Association of British Columbia (MABC).

“There is an urgent need to increase midwifery services and ensure they are fully integrated into the health care system to make it easier for women and families to access quality maternity care in their home communities across British Columbia,” said Ganga Jolicoeur, Executive Director of MABC. “Our New Vision for Midwifery and Maternity Care,’ is intended to bridge the growing gap in maternity care, especially in rural, northern and First Nations communities.”

By increasing the number of midwife-assisted births in BC to 35 per cent by 2020 and fully integrating midwifery services into BC’s health care system, the MABC’s vision offers:

- Increased access to quality maternity care, especially in rural, northern and First Nations communities
- Improvements in health outcomes for women and newborns
- More options for women to choose their maternity care provider
- Reduced pressure on family physicians working in underserved communities
- Reduced Caesarean rates and obstetrical interventions
- A realistic and achievable solution to close the growing maternity care gap
- Net cost savings of approximately \$60 million that can go towards other health care priorities

“Increased access to quality maternity care will lead to healthier babies, healthier moms and healthier families,” said Kelly Hayes, registered midwife and Vice President of the MABC. “We believe British Columbians will support our vision because of the real health benefits and net cost savings, estimated at \$60 million by 2020 and \$20 million annually after that. These savings could be used for other priorities in the health care system.”

The MABC’s vision contains a series of recommendations that involve BC’s registered midwives working with the provincial government, regional health authorities, hospitals, other maternity care providers and the First Nations Health Authority to help close the maternity care gap and better serve women and families in rural, northern and First Nations communities.



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These recommendations include increasing the number of midwives by 16 per year above the status quo and funding a credentialing program that enables internationally-trained midwives to practice in BC. The recommendations are consistent with the provincial government's approach, which, due to growing demand, is doubling the number of UBC trained graduating midwives from 10 to 20 by 2017.

"The MABC's vision document is timely and needed, particularly when factoring in that the average age of an obstetrician is almost 58, fewer and fewer family physicians are incorporating maternity care into their practices, and we're not training enough midwives," said Dr. Michael Klein, Professor Emeritus of Family Practice and Pediatrics, UBC.

The recommendations would require an investment beginning in 2014/15 of approximately \$3 million annually or \$225 per birth per year, based on the projected annual number of births per year. The total cumulative cost of the supports would reach approximately \$21 million by 2020/21.

The MABC's vision is founded on the idea that a high level of inter-professional collaboration among BC's maternity care providers will deliver the best outcomes for BC's women, babies and families.

"We do not presume to hold all the answers, but we believe we have provided a framework to move forward constructively, professionally and in partnership. The present and future health of BC's women, newborns and families provides a compelling reason to begin this important work now," added Jolicoeur.

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 birth. With extensive training that focuses on pregnancy, birth and the postpartum for both mom and baby, midwives are a safe and recognized choice for maternity care in BC , across Canada and around the world.

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To view the Vision document:

<http://www.bcmidwives.com/>

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