

RE: May 5th International Day of the Midwife - CAM launches *Choice. Access. Midwives.* campaign



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Montréal, May 4th, 2012 - The Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) would like to commemorate this May 5th, the International Day of the Midwife, by calling attention to the lack of access to midwifery care faced by most Canadian women. CAM believes that all women in Canada deserve to access midwifery care if they choose. As part of the Muskoka Initiative, the Canadian government has pledged to reduce maternal and infant mortality globally; CAM urges the Canadian government to make good on this promise, both at home and abroad. Supporting Maternal and Child Health globally also means supporting Canadian moms and babies in their choice to access midwifery care.

"We want a commitment from government to increase access to midwifery services through legislation and funding for midwifery care in all provinces and territories, by increasing the number of midwives in all areas including rural and remote communities, and by providing support for direct midwifery services on federal jurisdictions such as on reserve," says Ms. Anne Wilson, President of CAM.

"Midwives play an important role in returning birth back to rural and remote communities and increasing maternal and newborn health outcomes" says Nathalie Pambrun, co-Chair of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM). "It is unacceptable that infant and maternal mortality is 2 to 4 times greater in Aboriginal communities than non-Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal midwives working in every Aboriginal community will address this disparity," concluded Ms. Pambrun.

On May 5th 2012, CAM will be calling on Canadians across the country to take action and to support women's choice to access midwifery care by visiting www.canadianmidwives.org.

Important Facts:

- Midwives are **primary health care providers who work as part of the health care system** in most provinces and territories. They provide care to women during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period. Evidence from around the world demonstrates that midwives are essential to improving the lives of mothers and babies
- Aboriginal women and their infants have a **two to four times higher morbidity and mortality** rate than the average Canadian. Midwifery has been shown to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal communities, but currently the federal government provides little support for direct midwifery services on reserve.
- **100% of women in the Yukon, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick are unable to access regulated midwifery care** because these provinces have either not yet legislated the profession or have not provided adequate support for the regulation and funding of the profession as part of the health care system.

- **Women in remote areas often must leave their community for weeks before birth.** The disruption of social networks at this important time is detrimental to the health of women, their families and their communities. **Midwifery care is a safe and cost effective solution** that can be applied in rural and remote regions to bring birth as close to home as possible.

About Midwifery in Canada

There are just over 1100 registered midwives in Canada. The Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) is the national organization representing midwives and the profession of midwifery in Canada. The mission of CAM is to provide leadership and advocacy for midwifery as a regulated, publicly funded and vital part of the primary maternity care system in all provinces and territories.

The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) exists to promote excellence in reproductive health care for Inuit, First Nations, and Métis women. NACM advocate's for the restoration of midwifery education, the provision of midwifery services, and choice of birthplace for all Aboriginal communities consistent with the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

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

For more information or to set up interviews with midwives, please contact:

Anne Wilson
President/Présidente
Canadian Association of Midwives/
Association canadienne des sages-femmes
president@canadianmidwives.org

Tonia Occhionero
Executive Director/Directrice générale
Canadian Association of Midwives/
Association canadienne des sages-femmes
director@canadianmidwives.org
514-807-3668