



May 16, 2007

From the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health and the Canadian Association of Midwives

New Brunswick government announces its intention to regulate and fund midwifery in the province

Women's organizations celebrate more access to midwives for women in Atlantic Canada

Today, the New Brunswick government has demonstrated its willingness to move forward to enhance maternity care options and better meet the needs of New Brunswick women.

Both the **Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health** and the **Canadian Association of Midwives** want to congratulate the New Brunswick government for announcing its intention to regulate and fund midwifery.

Dr. Christine Saulnier of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health has been urging governments in the Atlantic to listen to the evidence and ensure that women in this region have access to a service available to women in the rest of the country. "The evidence is clear: midwifery offers high-quality, women-family-centred, community-based, collaborative care that has excellent outcomes for mothers and babies," says Dr. Saulnier.

The president of the Canadian Association of Midwives, Kerstin Martin congratulates the New Brunswick government for not only recognizing the need for regulation, but for announcing a commitment to fund this service: "Midwives are an integral part of the primary health care team in the provinces where they are regulated and funded. Funding ensures that midwifery is available and accessible to all women." In the Atlantic region, neither Newfoundland and Labrador nor PEI have made a commitment to move forward on this issue. While Nova Scotia has committed to regulating the profession, it has yet to make a public announcement about funding and implementation.

Regulated midwifery has helped to sustain very fragile maternity care services and even reintroduced them in some communities in Canada.

Currently, there are not enough family physicians doing prenatal care or labour and delivery to meet the demand of women in the region. Obstetricians are thus filling in many of the gaps. However, as specialists in high risk births, this is not the most effective allocation of scarce

resources.

Childbirth is not a medical event. Most women can and do experience it without complications. Integrating midwives, as specialists in normal birth, is a key strategy for supporting women to give birth under the care of the most appropriate care provider.

For media interviews, contact:

Dr. Christine Saulnier, Senior Researcher
Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health
Website: <http://www.acewh.dal.ca/>
Phone: 902-494-7877

Kerstin Martin, President
Canadian Association of Midwives
Website: <http://www.canadianmidwives.org/>
Phone: 902-431-0956