



**Canadian Association of Midwives
MEDIA RELEASE**

The world needs Midwives now more than ever!

350,000 more midwives needed worldwide to reduce unnecessary deaths and injury in childbirth

Midwives and families around the world are celebrating the 2010 International Day of the Midwife on May 5th! In partnership with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) is calling on world leaders to allocate more resources for midwives.

The upcoming G8 meeting in Canada will call attention to the importance of reducing maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality worldwide. Globally, midwives play an essential role and expanding midwifery care is one of the best ways to save the lives of vulnerable women and babies. Every year almost 600,000 women and millions of babies die before, during, or after childbirth; the majority in developing countries. *"Midwives help save the lives of mothers and their newborns, and without more midwives over half a million women will continue to die needlessly from pregnancy related complications each year"*, said ICM President Bridget Lynch. ICM estimates that worldwide 350,000 more midwives are needed to reduce unnecessary deaths and injury in childbirth. Strengthening midwifery must be a priority for all governments of the world if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Here in Canada, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, NWT, Nunavut and Nova Scotia have implemented midwifery as an integrated part of the health care system; in almost all remaining provinces and territories, the process of regulating the profession is well underway. Considering that only seventeen years ago midwives were not legally recognized anywhere in Canada, these developments represent tremendous and positive change. As a result, the number of midwives is growing. There are currently almost 900 midwives working in Canada, and 100 students admitted annually to university midwifery programs. The number of midwives across the country has more than doubled since 2001 and is continuing to grow rapidly. More than 100 new midwives are expected to be eligible for registration in Canada in 2010.

But it is not all celebration. Canada is experiencing a shortage and uneven geographic distribution of maternity care providers; especially in rural, remote and Aboriginal communities. Currently, midwives attend less than 5% of births nationwide. The need for more midwives in Canada is also evident.

Most recently, CAM developed a position statement on Midwifery Care and Normal Birth in consultation with midwife members and participants at the 2009 CAM Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba: http://www.canadianmidwives.org/pdf/NB_position_Jan2010.pdf. The statement highlights the importance of midwifery care and the need to reduce medical interventions in childbirth by restoring confidence in the physiologic process of birth.

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End
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For further information contact CAM President, Gisela Becker or Executive Director Tonia Occhionero at (514) 807-3668 or email cam_acsf@bellnet.ca

