



Open Letter to the Honourable Beverley J. Oda P.C., M.P.

May 13, 2010

The Honourable Beverley J. Oda P.C., M.P.
Minister of International Cooperation
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

RE: Global Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) and the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM)

Dear Minister Oda,

Recently, the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) wrote a letter to Prime Minister Harper congratulating the Government of Canada for its commitment to reducing maternal and infant morbidity and mortality both in Canada and worldwide. CAM is pleased to see that under Canadian leadership, the G8 supports this commitment with new resources for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH). In addition, CAM took this opportunity to draw the Canadian Government's attention specifically to the significant role of midwives globally and the evidence that expanding midwifery care is one of the best ways to save the lives of vulnerable women and babies.

On behalf of CAM, I would like to clarify our organization's position and respond to your comments during the Question Period in the House of Commons on May 11th, 2010 that CAM supports the Canadian Government's position on its MNCH strategy. CAM certainly continues to support Canada's contributions to maternal and child health to reduce maternal and infant morbidity and mortality globally. However, CAM believes that reproductive health care is an integral part of maternal health; this includes contraception, family planning and access to legal, safe abortion care as a fundamental right of women regardless of where they live.

Unsafe abortion is a significant cause of maternal mortality and morbidity in the world. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 68,000 women die annually as a result of complications of unsafe abortion; and between two million and seven million women each year survive unsafe abortion but sustain long-term damage or disease. The WHO also reports that in developed regions, nearly all abortions (92%) are safe, whereas in developing countries, more than half (55%) are unsafe. CAM agrees that as a preventable cause of maternal mortality and morbidity, safe abortion must be included in the Canadian Global Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Strategy.

The Canadian Association of Midwives would be pleased to continue the discussions on MNCH and to share our knowledge and expertise in midwifery development. We look forward to further dialogue with the Canadian Government and I would like to thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gisela Becker". The signature is written in black ink and includes a horizontal flourish at the end.

Gisela Becker, President
Canadian Association of Midwives

Email: president@canadianmidwives.org