

April 1, 2009

## **Midwifery now part of publicly funded services**

EDMONTON – Alberta Health Services – together with the Alberta Association of Midwives and Alberta Health & Wellness – today announced that an agreement has been reached for public funding of midwifery services in the province effective April 1, 2009. Previously, Albertans paid directly for midwifery services.

“The addition of midwives into the publicly funded system is part of the solution to help address increasing demands for maternity care,” said Dr. Stephen Duckett, President and Chief Executive Officer, Alberta Health Services. “Better integration of midwives into the full spectrum of maternity care provides better access and additional options for women when selecting birthing services.”

Midwives provide primary care to women with low-risk pregnancies. These services include prenatal care, care during labour and birth, and six weeks post-partum care for mother and newborn.

Alberta Association of Midwives President, Jane Baker said, “I am delighted with the new partnership with Alberta Health Services. This agreement is a milestone for women, their families, and for the profession of midwifery in Alberta.”

A multi-stakeholder working group with representation from maternity health care professionals will be established by Alberta Health Services to continue to develop strategies for maternity care services in the province, including the integration of midwifery services into the care system.

In October 2008, Alberta Health and Wellness Minister Ron Liepert announced the decision for public funding of midwifery services in the province, committing \$4 million in new funding for 2009/2010. With additional support from Alberta Health Services, a total of approximately \$4.7 million has been allocated for this agreement in 2009-2010.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.5 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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