

## AOM Statement on Reproductive Choice

The Association of Ontario Midwives believes that reproductive health care is an integral part of maternal health, including contraception, family planning and access to legal, safe abortion care. In particular, the AOM recognizes access to legal and safe abortion as a fundamental right of women regardless of where they live.

Unsafe abortion is a major cause of maternal mortality and morbidity in the world. Research from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that approximately 68,000 women die annually as a result of complications from unsafe abortion and almost all abortion-related deaths occur in developing countries. The WHO also reports that between two million and seven million women each year survive unsafe abortion but sustain long-term damage or disease. As well, there is a large disparity in accessible and safe abortion available to women in the developed and developing areas; in developed regions, nearly all abortions (92%) are safe whereas more than half (55%) are unsafe in developing countries.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, midwives have played an important role in women's reproductive health around the world. The AOM has always supported midwifery care -- provincially, nationally and internationally -- as a broader part of women's reproductive rights and recognized that all women should have access to contraception, family planning, and legal and safe abortion as a part of their basic right to health care. This position is in line with that of the Canadian Association of Midwives and ECHO, an agency of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care that focuses on women's health.<sup>2</sup> The AOM will continue to advocate for women's rights to reproductive health care everywhere, including access to legal and safe abortion care.

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<sup>1</sup> Guttmacher Institute, World Health Organization. Facts on Induced Abortion Worldwide. 2007. Available from:URL:[http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/unsafe\\_abortion/abortion\\_facts.pdf](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/unsafe_abortion/abortion_facts.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Canadian Association of Midwives. Open Letter to the Honourable Beverley J. Oda P.C., M.P. 2010 May. Available from:URL:[http://www.canadianmidwives.org/DATA/DOCUMENT/20100513CAM\\_open\\_letter.pdf](http://www.canadianmidwives.org/DATA/DOCUMENT/20100513CAM_open_letter.pdf) and ECHO. Improving Access to Abortion Services in Ontario. 2011.