

Aboriginal Midwifery Engagement Consultation

June 22, 2015

Context and Purpose



2015 Ontario Budget

Effective Health Care System for All

“Ontario will...continue to support midwifery practice groups and Aboriginal midwives who offer support to expectant mothers and their babies.”

- The ministry is engaging internal and external stakeholders with knowledge of health care service delivery for Aboriginal and First Nations communities to explore opportunities to support and expand Aboriginal midwifery services.

We are seeking your input today on the principles and objectives which should inform our approach to expanding these services.

Background

Aboriginal midwifery has been formally recognized in Ontario since 1991, but there have been limited opportunities for Aboriginal midwives to practice and provide services:

- Aboriginal midwifery is recognized in the *Midwifery Act* which allows Aboriginal midwives to provide traditional midwifery services and to use the title Aboriginal midwife.
- An exemption under the *Regulated Health Professions Act* acknowledges Aboriginal midwives' right to provide traditional midwifery services to Aboriginal persons or members of an Aboriginal community without being accountable to the College of Midwives of Ontario (CMO).

The Tsi Non:we Ionakeratstha Ona:grhsta at Six Nations of the Grand River is currently the only location in Ontario where Aboriginal midwives working under the exemption are publically funded. The Centre also offers training and the Aboriginal midwives trained under this program and practicing under the exemption are currently unable to establish publically-funded practices outside the Six Nations centre.



Registered Aboriginal midwives, such as those at Seventh Generation Midwives Toronto, offer the option of publically-funded culturally sensitive maternity care and midwifery services to the Aboriginal community within their catchments.

The Opportunity:

- Poor maternal and newborn outcomes have been identified as a concern for Aboriginal women, and an opportunity exists to improve quality outcomes through an investment in Aboriginal midwifery in Ontario.
- Success of the Six Nations model shows that midwifery services integrated into a holistic program of culturally safe and appropriate well woman care is a viable option.
- Government commitment for this initiative.

Guiding Principles



Access: Improve access – providing faster access to the right care.

Connect: Connect services – delivering better coordinated and integrated care in the community, closer to home.

Inform: Support people and patients – providing the education, information and transparency they need to make the right decisions about their health.

Protect: Protect our universal public health care system – making decisions based on value and quality, to sustain the system for generations to come.

Linking *Patients First* to Aboriginal Midwifery

Access: Increase access to Aboriginal midwifery as a culturally safe and appropriate community-based care option for low-risk birth with a focus on Aboriginal traditions and customs

Connect: Enable Aboriginal midwives to provide integrated care based on community needs.

Inform: Ensure communities are informed about the safety of care and variety of birthing options.

Protect: Ensure sustainability of Aboriginal midwifery care and ensure high quality of care for mothers and babies

Are these the right principles to guide our work?

Key Questions



Access

- How do we increase access to Aboriginal midwifery services where they are needed and where there is capacity to provide them?
- How do we ensure services are culturally safe, appropriate and meet community needs while maintaining traditional customs (e.g. holistic care, well-women programs)?
- What is the most effective way to stage the rollout given existing capacity (e.g., timeframe, availability of trained Aboriginal midwives), knowing that there will be annual opportunities to expand Aboriginal midwifery care?



Key Questions (cont'd)

Connect

- How can Aboriginal midwives be supported to provide integrated care as part of a health care team?
- How do we encourage collaboration and partnerships with existing primary care models so that clients experience coordination and continuity of care?

Inform

- What are the best ways to ensure communities are aware of and receive appropriate information on the options available for maternal and child care?
- What mechanisms can help ensure that communities are informed about the quality and safety of midwifery care in their community?

Key Questions (cont'd)



Protect

- What are the most effective ways to ensure oversight of service quality and client safety?
- What clinical partnerships and supports do Aboriginal midwives need to ensure they can provide safe and high-quality care (e.g. to make lab requisitions, transfer patients when necessary)?
- What practice supports can ensure Aboriginal midwives succeed (e.g. peer review, professional development, mentorship, oversight councils)?

Timelines and Next Steps



- Summer/Fall 2015 – stakeholder engagement, consultations with AHAC Working Group on program design
- Fall 2015 – develop criteria and issue Call for Proposals
- Early 2016 – commence funding
- 2016/17 – monitor program development and growth
- 2017/18 – explore opportunities to expand communities served and develop options and opportunities for remote northern/“fly-in” communities





Contact:

Richard Yampolsky

Program Manager, Ontario Midwifery Program

T: (416) 325-1957

E: richard.yampolsky@ontario.ca