

## Press Release

Women in Nova Scotia deserve a provincial midwifery plan

December 7, 2011

(Halifax/Annapolis Valley)- The Midwifery Coalition of Nova Scotia and its supporters, including the Valley Family for Midwifery and the Women's Action Alliance for Change NS, commends the Nova Scotia government for committing more funding towards midwifery in Nova Scotia, but is concerned that women in the province are still left with no plan for rolling out midwifery province-wide.

The Minister of Health and Wellness' announcement that the government will fund two more midwives in the Capital District Health Authority/IWK, fund and hire a clinical midwifery specialist, and fund a second attendant program for the three current sites, still leaves many women in Nova Scotia without access to midwifery services. As Dawn Hare, of the Valley Families for Midwifery, says of this announcement: "Valley families are still left with no access. The irony is not lost on our families who live in the one area of the province that lost access to midwives after having had access for 25 years. These women are still in limbo. When can they expect to have access?"

The MCNS is pleased that the government is acting on some of the recommendations in the evaluation report that was tabled in August. "However, what we really want is for the government to outline its plan to ensure that women in all areas of the province can have access to midwifery if they so choose. We want a plan that includes a timeline with targets, so that women can incorporate this into their own planning," says Christine Saulnier, Co-Chair of the Midwifery Coalition of Nova Scotia.

This announcement also leave us with questions. First, will the two new midwives be able to set up a community-based practice independent of the IWK, something that the MCNS has strongly advocated? Second, when will the funding for these initiative be forthcoming -immediately or in the new fiscal year?

Kaley Kennedy, Chair of the WACNS' Health and Reproductive Justice working group summarizes the situation as follows: "While on the one hand we want to thank the NS for their commitment to midwifery, what we heard is still not enough and leaves too many women without access and without a timeline for when they might have access."

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For media inquiries, please call Christine Saulnier, MCNS, Co-Chair at 425-2750.

### Background:

The Midwifery Coalition of Nova Scotia (MCNS) is a consumer group. For over 20 years, it has been working to have midwifery accepted as a regulated health profession. Our goal is for midwifery services to be available to all women in Nova Scotia, and have these services covered by health insurance. For more information on MCNS see, <http://mcns.chebucto.org/>

Valley Families for Midwifery (VFM) is a group of Annapolis Valley women and families who believe that all Nova Scotians deserve access to midwifery care services. In March 2009, provincial regulations cut off midwifery services to the Valley and VFM has been dedicated to reinstating this model of maternity care ever since. For more information, please contact [valleyfamiliesformidwifery@gmail.com](mailto:valleyfamiliesformidwifery@gmail.com)

The Women's Action Alliance for Change Nova Scotia (WACNS) is an independent, non-partisan alliance of organizations and individual women. WACNS advocates for women's equality and public policies that ensure justice, dignity, peace, and security for all. For more information, see [www.wacns.ca](http://www.wacns.ca).