



## THE MIDWIFERY COALITION OF NOVA SCOTIA

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### **Nova Scotia Midwifery Still Needs a Push 30 years later**

For Immediate Release  
October 16, 2014

Halifax

This Saturday the Midwifery Coalition of Nova Scotia (MCNS) is celebrating 30 years of advocacy.

“While there are some successes, there is much more work ahead to achieve what it set out to do: have publicly funded midwifery services available as an option to all women in Nova Scotia” says Jan Catano, founding member of MCNS and current board member.

Catano reflects on the history and status of midwifery in Nova Scotia, “Since the MCNS was founded, there is mounting evidence to support the excellent, cost-effective care provided by midwives across the world and in Canada. After multiple studies and committees, Nova Scotia began regulating midwives in 2009-- 15 years after Ontario and Alberta started regulating midwifery in 1994. This was a huge step forward, but unfortunately only for some women in Nova Scotia. There are still only 9 midwives practicing in the province. Some women who had access prior to regulation lost their access and the current number of midwives is not sufficient to sustain a healthy practice and not enough considering the demand that exists.”

MCNS chair, Nicole Eddy, says: “While we might be doing better than our Atlantic neighbours who still have no practicing midwives, that isn’t saying much. From 38 practicing midwives in Manitoba to 681 in Ontario, Nova Scotia is lagging far behind everyone else.”

She continues: “As a consumer organization, the MCNS will continue to advocate for midwifery to be publicly funded, and to also ensure that it is implemented to allow midwives to practice according to the model of care that has shown such excellent outcomes.

“The MCNS’ vision for the next 30 years is fully funded accessible midwifery for all Nova Scotian women who want the option, an education program for training midwives right here at home, and several birthing centres. In short, the MCNS vision is to reclaim birth for our communities, and support our young families with the best start possible.”

Midwives are experts in normal pregnancy, birth and newborn care. They save the health care system because they cost less and their care involves fewer interventions. Midwifery care has been shown to result in excellent outcomes for mom and babies, including breastfeeding rates. The current Minister of Health is embarking on significant reform of the health care system, how do midwives figure into that reform? If the Minister is interested in improving front line service then midwifery should be part of that plan.

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Members of the MCNS are available for interviews, please contact Jan Catano, (902) 422-6123

Media is welcome to attend the event on Saturday, October 18, 1PM at the Company House, 2202 Gottingen St., Halifax.