

Government of the Northwest Territories
P.O. Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Date: _____

Dear _____,

I, along with other residents of the NWT would like to call your attention to the lack of access to midwifery care faced by most NWT women. I believe that all women in the NWT deserve to access midwifery care if they choose. The expansion of midwifery services in the NWT has been a part of the GNWT Department of Health Social Services' strategic plan for the past four years; now is the time to make good on this promise. Supporting maternal and child health means supporting NWT moms and babies by ensuring they have the opportunity to choose midwifery care.

I urge the Government of the Northwest Territories:

- ✓ to commit to expanding the Midwifery Program to other communities in the NWT beyond Fort Smith for the fiscal year 2013/2014 by identifying the selected communities and committing to the continuity of this expansion with core funding;
- ✓ to ensure that women feel confident and secure to stay in their communities during the normal and healthy process of pregnancy and birth by developing an education plan on the role and benefits of midwifery that will be delivered to all women and families in the NWT beginning in the fiscal year 2013/14.

Together, these changes will help reduce costs for the health care system, while allowing all women to have the **Choice to Access Midwifery Care**.

Sincerely,

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Printed Name)

_____ (Address)

Some important facts:

- Midwives are **primary health care providers who work as part of the health care system** in most provinces and territories. They provide care to women during pregnancy, birth and the postpartum period.
- Aboriginal women and their infants have a **two to four times higher morbidity and mortality** rate than the average Canadian. While midwifery has been shown to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal communities, the GNWT provides little support for direct midwifery services in communities. All Aboriginal communities deserve the right to choose midwifery care.
- **Midwifery care is a safe and cost effective solution** that can be applied in rural and remote regions to bring birth as close to home as possible.

The 2011 Midwifery Review and Expansion Analysis found that:

- Women and families in remote areas who leave their community for weeks before birth experience an increase in: family stress; rates of intervention; rates of substance abuse; rates of poor diet and a loss of autonomy while putting a financial strain on an already resource limited system.
- **Returning birth to communities reduces domestic violence and sexual assault;** increases male investment in newborn care and partner care; builds capacity; restores skills and pride; builds strong family, community and intergenerational relationships; is a model of respect for traditional knowledge, and promotes healthy behaviours.