

BC ABORIGINAL MATERNAL HEALTH PROJECT

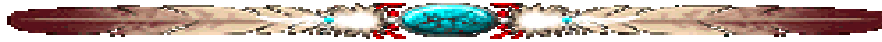
HISTORY

In September 2004, the Maternity Care Enhancement Project (MCEP) was initiated with a mandate to develop recommended strategies for sustainable maternity care services in British Columbia. During the MCEP process, it was determined that a parallel research and consultation process should occur to develop strategies to ensure that Aboriginal women and families have access to high quality maternity care services. The Aboriginal Maternal Health Project was initiated and an ad-hoc committee with representation from each of the health authorities began meeting in the spring of 2005. A more formal steering committee, the Aboriginal Maternal Health Steering Committee (“AMHSC”), was drawn together to include broader representation from organizations such as the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO), the BC Association of Pregnancy Outreach Programs (BCAPOP), the Rural Aboriginal Maternity Care Project, the Centre for Rural Health Research, and the BC Reproductive Care Program (BCRCP).

PROGRESS

The AMHSC held a number of meetings and contracted a research assistant and an Aboriginal community consultant. The two contractors visited a number of BC Aboriginal communities to document their concerns to take forward to the AMHSC. Three documents were produced, *Aboriginal Elder's Experiences of Birth*, and *Aboriginal Maternal Health in British Columbia*. In October of 2006 a provincial 2 day forum on a reserve in North Vancouver was hosted by the PHSA to invite new Aboriginal mothers to voice their concerns and their success stories. Participants included rural Aboriginal and some urban Aboriginal communities throughout BC, each of the Health Authorities, their Aboriginal health managers, and service providers. From this forum came nine recommendations. Since the forum a strategic plan has been developed to put into action the nine AMH forum recommendations. This strategic plan has been distributed to the members of the AMHSC

The next step is, in collaboration with the BC Perinatal Health Program (BCPHP), to reconvene the AMHSC to implement the recommendations into an action plan.



9 Recommendations from BC's Aboriginal Women for Concrete, Achievable Aboriginal Maternal Health Projects

- 1. Increase Prenatal / Postnatal Supports**
- 2. Increase Caesarean Section Information**
- 3. Incorporate Doulas into care**
- 4. Bring prenatal care to communities**
- 5. Increase Resources on Maternal Health and Patient Rights**
- 6. Provide Sex education & Pregnancy Planning**
- 7. Provide Services for incarcerated women**
- 8. Supporting the ongoing development of aboriginal midwifery services in BC**
- 9. Ongoing monitoring of intervention rates and obstetrical experience of aboriginal women in BC (e.g. c-section rates, transfer rates, induction rates, assisted vaginal delivery rates)**