

CMRC Position Statement Supporting Indigenous Midwifery

Introduction

The CMRC supports Indigenous Peoples' self-determination. We recognize that colonial violence towards Indigenous Peoples began hundreds of years ago and is ongoing. As midwifery regulators, we are part of the colonial system. It is only through consistent, concrete action to uphold Indigenous rights and eliminate racism within the health care system that CMRC and its members can foster the trust of Indigenous Peoples.

Acknowledgments

We acknowledge that Indigenous midwives were here first, contributing to the health and strength of their communities. The erosion of Indigenous midwifery, and the control of Indigenous midwifery knowledge and practices were intentional tools of colonization.

CMRC stands in solidarity with Indigenous midwives to work within regulatory systems or to have sovereignty over their own systems of governance. We recognize the vital role Indigenous midwifery plays in supporting traditional birthing practices in communities, and the positive impact midwives have in the lives of parents, babies and families. Midwifery and access to birth supports in communities to keep birthing people and babies close to family and home is an important part of the work needed to ensure equitable, culturally safe, community-led and distinctions-based approaches to health services.

Indigenous midwifery services are more than clinical skills. Indigenous midwives incorporate Nation-specific teachings, ceremonies and languages that honour Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous midwives continue to sustain their knowledge and practices and contribute to the strength and health of Indigenous families, communities, and Nations. We recognize that Indigenous midwives are a protective force against racism in the health care system, and investing in Indigenous-led midwifery increases access to safer and better sexual and reproductive health care.

Position

CMRC is committed to supporting Indigenous-led midwifery, directly when asked or indirectly in the course of our work, as Indigenous communities return midwifery care to Indigenous people in all settings.

CMRC supports its members to seek change in our regulatory and health care systems to promote the growth and re-establishment of Indigenous midwifery in all Indigenous communities.

CMRC expects all midwives to provide culturally safe care when working with Indigenous clients in all settings, as outlined in the *Canadian Competencies for Midwives*.

CMRC has a role in the work to transform health care to be distinctions-based and self-determined. CMRC encourages its members to take this statement to their Boards/Councils for endorsement. CMRC also encourages its members to use this statement to work with governments to remove legislative barriers to Indigenous Midwifery. In this way, more First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples will have culturally safe care, and more will be able to give birth in their own communities.

Note: ¹ Indigenous Midwifery is midwifery care provided by First Nations, Inuit or Metis midwives who have trained in community-based or university-based programs, regardless of registration status, or by another midwife who has been formally accepted by an Indigenous community to provide midwifery care. Indigenous Midwifery serves Indigenous Peoples, regardless of location or geography.

References

Association of Ontario Midwives Indigenous Self-Identity Statement.

<https://www.ontariomidwives.ca/indigenous-self-identity-statement#:~:text=Indigenous%20midwifery%20services%20are%20more,established%20in%20all%20Indigenous%20communities.>

BCCNM. Racism in Health Care: An Apology to Indigenous Peoples and a Pledge to be Anti-Racist.

<https://www.bccnm.ca/BCCNM/Announcements/Pages/Announcement.aspx?AnnouncementID=267>

Canadian Association of Midwives. Position Statement on Combatting Anti-Indigenous Racism.

https://canadianmidwives.org/sites/canadianmidwives.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CAM_PSCombattingAnti-IndigenousRacism_VF_20211020-1.pdf

Government of Canada. ISC. <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/minister-of-indigenous-services-canada-issues-statement-on-the-international-day-of-the-midwife-844711857.html>

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