



**Native Youth Sexual Health Network and
The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives Launch
Aboriginal Midwifery Toolkit**

Resource aims to increase midwifery care for First Nations, Inuit and Métis

Toronto, May 28, 2014 - The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) and the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) are excited to announce the launch of the Aboriginal Midwifery Toolkit. Developed to provide concrete knowledge and tools for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities looking to bring birth and midwifery care closer to home, the Toolkit is an interactive online resource with a print version designed for communities with limited internet access. It can be found at www.aboriginalmidwives.ca/toolkit.

"We are launching this innovative toolkit at an exciting time, when the number of Aboriginal midwives working in practices providing care to Aboriginal communities across Canada is growing. However, many Aboriginal families are still not able to access midwifery care in their communities. As a result, maternal mortality remains high and infant mortality rates are 1.7-4 times higher than in non-Aboriginal communities." Ellen Blais, Co-chair of the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives

"Young people and communities tell us all the time about the need for on the ground supports and resources for birth and reproductive justice. We are honored to continue to partner with the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives in supporting the releases of the toolkit across Turtle Island. The importance of the resurgence of Indigenous midwifery and doula knowledge - and access to it - cannot be overstated." Native Youth Sexual Health Network

The launch is taking place concurrently with the *Global Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Summit: Saving Every Woman, Every Child* conference, hosted by Canada from May 28 - 30, 2014, in order to underline the crucial role Aboriginal midwives play in diminishing health disparities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mothers. "NACM and NYSHN support the fact the Government of Canada is taking a leadership role in advocating for improved maternal health outcomes globally, and want to sustain the focus of governments and communities across Canada with respect to the health care provided to Aboriginal women and children in Canada", affirmed Ms. Blais.

NYSHN and NACM will be hosting a special reception for the launch of the Toolkit on May 28th at 6pm, at the new Toronto Birth Centre, that just celebrated its 50th birth!

NACM and NYSHN work together at the intersections of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice. These intersections include bridging the gap between culturally safe sex education and midwifery care through a mutually supportive partnership that will increase education, share skills, as well the opportunity for NACM members and NYSHN staff to work collaboratively to deliver workshops and information in our communities. We will also be working to improve access to midwifery care amongst younger parents and other members in our networks - including people who are incarcerated, within the criminal justice or child welfare system, HIV positive, Two-Spirit, Trans, and Gender non-conforming families.

About NACM

The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives is a diverse group of midwives from all regions of Canada, representing First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. We advocate for the restoration of midwifery education, the provision of midwifery services, and choice of birthplace for all Aboriginal communities. www.aboriginalmidwives.ca

About NYSHN

The Native Youth Sexual Health Network is an organization by and for Indigenous youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice throughout the United States and Canada. NYSHN works with Indigenous peoples to advocate for and build strong, comprehensive, and culturally safe sexual and reproductive health initiatives in their own communities. www.nativeyouthsexualhealth.com

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