

International Day of the Midwife 2022

Joint Statement by Pauktuutit, Inuit Women of Canada and National Aboriginal Council of Midwives



The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives (NACM) exists to promote excellence in sexual and reproductive health care for Indigenous peoples across Canada. NACM advocates for midwifery education, services, and choice of birthplace for all Indigenous communities. As active members of the Canadian Association of Midwives, NACM represents the professional development and practice needs of Indigenous midwives to the responsible health authorities in Canada and the global community.

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada is the national organization representing all Inuit women in Canada. Pauktuutit fosters a greater awareness of the needs of Inuit women, and to encourage their participation in community, regional and national concerns in relation to social, cultural, and economic development.

Indigenous midwives attend to the oldest and most important ceremony in our diverse Indigenous cultures, the birth of a new relative into our community. We stand with thousands of midwives globally, our siblings, our parents, our grandparents, and our Ancestors who have supported the work of birth and parenting in all Indigenous communities.

The restoration, growth and sustainability of Indigenous midwifery is essential to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous communities. Inuit midwives and community members have led the way in the restoration of Indigenous midwifery in Canada. The return of traditional midwifery services to Inuit communities in Nunavik, Quebec started with community activism and was possible due to the work of traditional midwives who came before us. Since 1986 midwives have been the on-call, primary care providers for maternity care along the Hudson Bay coast through the Inuulitsivik Health Center. Midwifery healthcare and education in Nunavik is Inuit-led, offered in Inuktitut, and is rooted in the needs of communities.

Inuit communities across the north have been working to return birth to their communities. This work is often being done by a small number of Inuit midwives - one or two midwives advocating for the return of midwifery services. Midwifery is difficult work to do alone. The work of returning traditional midwifery services is a shared responsibility. It takes midwives, community members, birth workers, other healthcare providers, the support of non-Indigenous allies, and all levels of government. We must all work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our babies, our families, our communities, and our future generations.

International Day of the Midwife 2022

Joint Statement by Pauktuutit, Inuit Women of Canada and National Aboriginal Council of Midwives

Indigenous Midwives in every Indigenous community is a dream that is not too big for us. It is a dream for health and healing in our communities. We need to bring birth and midwifery education programs back to our communities, in Indigenous languages and with Indigenous teachings.

Today, NACM and Pauktuutit jointly call on all levels of government to fund and support the integration of traditional midwifery practices into health service delivery, and to recognize the leadership of Inuit midwives for their 36 years of health care excellence. We call on governments, primary care providers, health educators, policy makers and administrators to center the work of Indigenous midwives. We must work together to grow and sustain Indigenous-led sexual and reproductive health care in our communities.

In commemoration of International Day of the midwife, we honor the leadership, skills, and knowledge of past and present Indigenous midwives.

Ajuinnata utirtisinimik nuanattini nutarartaatitsinirmik (titsijunirmik)
Nakurmiik nilliviqartitaugatta