

Thank you for your email, and for the opportunity to address the committee. At the end of the session we were invited to provide additional information if we so chose. I believe that the witnesses on May 6th and May 10th supported the value of midwives and midwifery services to women's health in Canada.

We all realize that with the exception of the Royal Military Colleges, post secondary education is the preview of the provincial government. However, as I think has been demonstrated, the provision of midwifery services is a federal issue; there are now only 6 schools of midwifery in Canada, there is no longer a bilingual school of Midwifery, and there is no longer a school with a focus on rural and remote care.

Midwives, as providers of homebirth obstetrical care, are specialists in the provision of care in low-resource settings. However, the former Laurentian School of Midwifery placed an emphasis on this aspect of care. Unlike the urban settings of McMaster and Ryerson, students started their education in a community (Sudbury), where there are ZERO perinatologists, where women must travel 300km just to have an amniocentesis or a level 2 ultrasound, and where creative thinking and flexibility is the hallmark of women-centred obstetrical care. I would offer the following recommendations if your committee were willing to use its findings and influence as the state of midwifery education and services is examined:

1. It is essential that midwifery students have the ability to learn in a bilingual institution so that they are able to offer midwifery services in both official languages to the women of Canada.
2. A northern and rural focus must be maintained. Students cannot learn this while working and learning in large urban environments which offer services that will not be available to them when they return to their northern and rural communities.
3. Faculty who teach at any new site must also have experience working in lower resource settings, not just urban settings where every perinatal service is available within a half-hour's drive.
4. This may be an ideal opportunity to re-craft the third site in Ontario as a TRUE Northern-Francophone-Indigenous focussed site. As was mentioned by Dr. Susan James, this may not be best served by partnering in the previous OMEP consortium (of McMaster, Ryerson, Laurentian), but instead may be better served by partnering with national organizations such as the National Aboriginal Council of Midwives and the Canadian Association of Midwives in recognition of the need to education midwives for Canada, not just Ontario.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer my voice in this process.

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