

Resolution Proposal for Equal Access to Midwifery Services in Francophone Communities in Canada

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Introduction:

Whereas CAM has adopted a new inclusive governance structure to improve the representation of equity-deserving groups—including francophones—and whereas there is an urgent shortage of francophone midwifery providers since the closure of the only bilingual midwifery education program in Ontario, the undersigned present this resolution to seek support from the national association to advocate for French-speaking midwives and francophone communities in minority settings across Canada.

First Concern: Lack of Institutional Support

WHEREAS francophone midwives outside of Quebec face a lack of national support, along with limited awareness of the specific challenges they face in their practice. The shortage of resources and the absence of a structured framework to build capacity compromises the delivery of services in French. Increased support from regional, provincial, and national associations, in partnership with francophone organizations, is essential to address these gaps and ensure equitable access to care for francophones living in minority settings.

Second Concern: Quality and Accessibility of French-Language Services

WHEREAS the absence of data on the provision of care in French limits understanding of client needs and undermines the quality and safety of services provided. Improved data collection is needed to assess the impact of limited French-language services. The active offer of care in French is essential, especially at critical times such as childbirth.

Third Concern: Gaps in French-Language Education and Research

WHEREAS since the closure of the midwifery education program at Laurentian University in 2021, there is no longer a midwifery education program offered outside of Quebec in French, nor any bridging program for internationally educated francophone midwives outside of Quebec, hindering current recruitment efforts. Research contributions to support projects aimed at improving access to health services for francophones in minority settings are not possible without the backing of an education program. This has created a deficit in qualified workforce capacity to meet the needs of the minority francophone population. It is imperative to study and support the creation of new education programs by and for francophones, and to develop a database that can identify and connect francophone midwives with clients who require French-language services.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

To ensure the future of the profession and preserve access to care in French, we call for the creation of a national committee to assess the needs of francophone midwives in Canada, including those in minority contexts, and to propose appropriate solutions. This committee must include diverse representation, including racialized, Indigenous, and immigrant midwives, to reflect the full range of issues and local realities. Only a structured and sustained commitment will ensure equitable access to care for francophone communities in Canada.

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