



A Statement on Gender Inclusivity & Human Rights

The Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) is an organization that is rooted in the feminist movement and has a history of commitment to human rights and social justice. It is our goal to pursue visionary leadership in our work on these issues within the Canadian and global healthcare context. We are committed to including trans, gender queer, intersex and marginalized communities in our central dialogue and ensuring that CAM is inclusive in its statements, actions and in all aspects of its work. These priorities are not established by the needs of the majority but by the importance of the inclusion of all people.

We are aware of recent events in the United States and the claims of some that the important steps being taken to ensure that trans, gender queer and intersex people in our care and in our communities are not marginalized, denied or made invisible, are somehow undermining our ability to provide woman-centered care. CAM refutes this statement completely. We believe that it is critical for midwives to honour and respect all people's right to self-determination and their right to receive health care that is free from discrimination, transphobia and prejudice. Women and women's health care will not benefit by refusing to recognize or include the rights of others.

We are aware that transphobia disproportionately affects those with other, often intersecting, marginalized identities such as racialized persons, self-identified Indigenous people, those living as colonized people, those living with the legacy of residential schools, differently abled people and all living with the effects of the social determinants of health.

Discrimination in the provision of services can cause trans people to delay or avoid necessary health care services often to the point of putting their overall health at risk. We are also aware that health equity depends upon care providers being informed about the needs of trans, gender queer or intersex people. CAM is committed to providing resources and education for our members and in auditing our own organization to ensure inclusion. We have begun our work on these issues within CAM and recognize that we still have much to learn and far to go as an organization and as individuals. We are committed to our own continuing education, in partnership with organizations and individuals who can provide guidance and direction to CAM. CAM believes that all midwives and midwifery practices can and should provide an environment where all individuals are welcomed, treated with dignity and respect and encouraged to be active members of the community.

It is our hope and intent that all midwives will be supported in their practice and their profession regardless of gender identity or gender expression and likewise, that Canadian midwives will welcome all clients and provide them with compassionate, culturally safe care regardless of gender identity or gender expression. We support the changes that the Midwives Alliance of North America (MANA) has made to their core competencies document to reflect the diversity of midwives and clients and we are in the process of ensuring that our own Mission Statement, Values and Strategic Objectives are inclusive in language, scope and intent. We believe that ensuring that our work and our language reflects the existence and inclusion of trans, gender queer and intersex people does not erase the existence of women, it simply extends basic human rights to all midwives and the people they serve.

The Board of Directors
of the Canadian Association of Midwives

September 2015