

## **Questions and Responses to Questions Posed by NWT Citizens for Midwifery**

**By: David Wasylciw**

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Question: We expect that the results of the Midwifery Review and Expansion Analysis (completion date: January 2012) will show strong support for the expansion of the NWT Midwifery Program.

(a) As an elected MLA, will you support an expansion of the NWT Midwifery Program?

Response: Absolutely. Women had been giving birth assisted by midwives for centuries before hospital-only birth policies came into effect, and right now, many women have to give birth alone, hundreds of kilometers from their homes and families. While there is always a risk to childbirth, women should be given the opportunity to make informed choices about who is present during birth.

(b) What should the priorities of this expansion be?

Response: A midwifery clinic has been operating successfully in Fort Smith since 2005 – I would like to see more clinics like this one throughout the territory. As well, having a midwifery program in Yellowknife and midwifery education at Aurora College would make midwives accessible to both residents of Yellowknife and women who have to travel for birth, and increase the number of midwives available to work both in Yellowknife and in smaller communities.

(c) How will you ensure that the NWT Midwifery Program is included in the 2012/2013 business plan?

Response: Any expansion of the NWT midwifery program needs to happen gradually, with effective research and evaluation to show over time that midwifery is a beneficial and cost-effective approach. As an MLA, I would look for the 2012/2013 business plan to include continuation and expansion of midwifery in Yellowknife, while using evidenced-based decision making to argue for further additions to midwifery programming in the future.