



For Immediate Release

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Doula Initiative Enables Access for First Nations and Aboriginal Women

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and BC Association of Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) are pleased to announce a shared \$360,000 investment to fund doula services for First Nations and Aboriginal families in BC. The grant funding will support families to pay for prenatal, birth and post-partum doula services regardless of their location in the province.

A doula provides emotional, physical, and spiritual support for women and families during pregnancy, labour and after birth. BCAAFC and FNHA recognize the sacred time of pregnancy, birth and early parenting, and together want to ensure First Nations and Aboriginal families have access to the appropriate supports they need to feel comfortable and confident throughout their journey.

“This investment extends doula services to at-home on-reserve families for the first time - we are proud to partner with the BCAAFC in making this important service more accessible to our community members,” said Richard Jock, Chief Operating Officer for the FNHA.

Doula services are currently not covered through the public health system. This grant helps to address the cost of doula care, with a particular interest in supporting families who would not otherwise be able to afford these services. Doula care has been associated with better health outcomes for mother and baby, offers a holistic approach to birthing, and decreases the likelihood of physician intervention during labour.

“Helping to cover the costs of doula care is important to ensure that Aboriginal families have the choice to work with a doula and are able to access these services without a cost barrier,” said Paul Lacerte, Executive Director of the BCAAFC concludes.

This initiative was created in response to the priority to improve maternity care in the Transformative Change Accord: First Nations Health Plan. The program offers up to \$1,000 of coverage for each pregnancy in a family. This 2015-2016 investment is available for families living on or off-reserve in BC where the pregnant woman or her partner self-identifies as First Nations or Aboriginal.

More information on the initiative and support finding a doula in your area can be found by emailing: doulasupport@bcaafc.com or by calling: 1-800-990-2432.



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

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