QUEBEC

Overview

Midwives in Quebec are autonomous healthcare providers contracted through community health clinics (Centres de santé et de services sociaux; CSSS). Midwives work primarily in birth centres, but also in community, hospital, and home settings. In 2012, there were 131 midwives working across the province. Midwifery services are funded through the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec (Quebec health insurance).

Regulation

Midwifery in Quebec is regulated under the Midwives Act and a number of other laws. Since 1999, midwives must register with the Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec (OSFQ) in order to practise. There are three routes to registration: the midwifery program at l’Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR); reciprocity through being registered in another province; and a bridging program for international midwives, also through the UQTR. There is a French language requirement for midwives educated outside of Quebec and France.

There is an additional route to registration for Inuit midwives. The Order has recognized the Nunavik midwifery training program, and graduates are registered with the OSFQ. Each graduate receives a license to practice from the Order and the French language requirement is not applied in Nunavik.

Association

Le Regroupement les Sages-Femmes du Québec (RSFQ) works to develop the profession of midwifery in Quebec and defend the interests of its members. Midwives on the Ungava Coast are included as members of the RSFQ, and the association is examining the possibility of integrating
Hudson Bay midwives into its membership. The Nunavik Midwives Association is an association of Inuit midwives.

**Funding**

Midwives are autonomous healthcare providers who are hired on contract with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux. Midwives are paid a salary plus benefits. All midwives have contracts with a CSSS, which provides equipment and supplies and shares the cost of liability insurance.

**Aboriginal Midwifery**

A clause exists in the Midwives Act for Aboriginal communities to negotiate an agreement with the Government for Aboriginal midwives to practise in their communities without being registered with the OSFQ.

Article 12.2 of the Midwives Act states that “an agreement between the Government and a Native nation represented by the band councils of all the communities forming the Native nation, a Native community represented by its band council or by its council in the case of a Northern village, a group of communities so represented or any other Native group, allowing a Native person who is not a member of the Order to perform acts described in section 6 in the territory defined in the agreement, in accordance with the conditions fixed therein and to the extent that the terms of the agreement are observed.” However, no agreement has been signed to this day. Most First Nations mothers have to give birth in hospitals outside their communities. Many women living in remote communities, particularly those living on the Lower Northern Shore, have to be separated from their families for many weeks.

Additionally, there is a separate Act addressing the situation for the Cree Nation. Through the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services was created. There has been discussion regarding midwifery services and a training program for a number of years. A midwife worked for several years for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services to open a birthing centre in Mistissini, but this hasn’t happened yet. UQTR has been discussing the possibility of having a Cree training program. This program would last 4 years and would mostly take place in Cree communities.
Education

UQTR has a four-year baccalaureate program. The program presently accepts 24 students each year. UQTR also offers a bridging program for internationally trained midwives. This program is offered in French only.

The Inuulitsivik Health Centre offers the Inuulitsiviup Nutarataatitsijingita Ilisarningata Aulagusinga (INIA), which is a midwifery education program leading to registration with the OSFQ. Thus, Inuit midwives receive their training according to traditional learning methods in the Maternities of Hudson Bay and recently of Ungava Bay.

Contacts and websites to visit for more information:

**Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec**
204, rue Notre-Dame ouest, bureau 400
Montréal QC H2Y 1T3
877-711-1313 or 514-286-1313
Email: info@osfq.org
Website: www.osfq.org

**Le Regroupement les Sages-Femmes du Québec**
59 Riverview Street
Lasalle QC H8R 3R9
514-738-8090
Email: info@rsfq.qc.ca
Website: www.rsfq.qc.ca

**Nunavik Midwives Association**
819-254-0172
Email: brenda.epoo@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

**Programme de Baccalauréat en pratique sage-femme, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières**
3351, boul. des Forges
Trois-Rivières QC G9A 5H7
819-376-5011 ext. 4065
Email: sage.femme@uqtr.ca
Website: www.uqtr.ca/sage-femme

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*Katsi Cook, Aboriginal midwife, with Jan Longboat, Elder*