

Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines

Backgrounder: Process for development of the *Guidelines*

Guidelines for Maternal and Newborn Services were first published in Canada by the Department of National Health and Welfare in 1968. These *Guidelines* were subsequently revised in 1974 and again in 1987. Changes were made in each version in keeping with the rapid changes which had occurred in maternal and newborn care in Canada. In 1975, when the first revision took place, family-centred maternity and newborn care was not yet widely accepted as essential for mothers, babies and families. By 1987, that had changed and the title of the *Guidelines* was changed to *Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines*.

This edition of the *Family-Centred Maternity and Newborn Care: National Guidelines* was developed through a collaborative process involving over 70 professionals and consumers across Canada, and facilitated by Health Canada and the Canadian Institute of Child Health. The process of developing these *Guidelines* included consultation with many stakeholders involved in the care of mothers and babies in Canada and was accomplished in three stages—a survey of users; consultation with national professional and consumer organizations; and the actual writing and review by experts in maternal and newborn care, and families from all regions of the country.

In order to develop the *Guidelines*, a Core Group¹ of national professional and consumer organizations, who are involved in the care of mothers and babies, was formed. They identified recent information that was relevant to the development of the *Guidelines*; planned the process for writing the *Guidelines*; made recommendations regarding the structure of the *Guidelines*; and identified who should write the *Guidelines*.

Based on these recommendations, Working Groups were established to write the *Guidelines* under the coordination of a Project Director. There were 13 working groups, totaling 70 people. Each Working Group was interdisciplinary in nature—medicine (neonatology, obstetrics/perinatology, anaesthesia, and family medicine); nursing (community and hospital); midwifery; families; childbirth education; administration; architecture and planning. The members of the Working Groups were recommended by the organizations based on their expertise and represented all regions of the country. Each of the chapters went through several drafts during this process. The entire document was reviewed, revised and finalized through a peer review process.

The purpose of these *Guidelines* is to assist hospitals and other health care agencies in planning, implementing and evaluating maternal and newborn programs and services. They are designed for policy makers, health care providers (e.g. physicians, nurses, midwives), parents, program planners and administrators. Because of the diversity of Canada's regions and communities, the *Guidelines* are intended to be sufficiently flexible to encompass the various approaches, policies and protocols of Canadian institutions, agencies, communities and regions. These *Guidelines* have been endorsed by the Canadian Institute of Child Health, the Canadian Coalition for

Regionalized Perinatal Care, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada, the Canadian Public Health Association, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses - Canada, and the International Childbirth Education Association.

Core Group Members

Aboriginal Nurses Association
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Canada
Canada Anaesthetist Society
Canadian Coalition for the Prevention of Developmental Disabilities
Canadian Coalition for Regionalized Perinatal Care
Canadian Confederation of Midwives
Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation
Canadian Healthcare Association
Canadian Institute of Child Health
Canadian Medical Association
Canadian Nurses Association
Canadian Paediatric Society
Canadian Public Health Association
College of Family Physicians of Canada
Health Canada
International Childbirth Education Association
Native Physicians Association of Canada
Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada