

# Policy statement by the Aboriginal Health Initiatives Committee: Returning Birth to Aboriginal, Rural and Remote Communities

A policy statement released by the SOGC's Aboriginal Health Initiatives Committee on returning birth to Aboriginal, rural and remote communities was published in the December issue of the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*.

Through this policy statement, the committee seeks to heighten awareness of the current state of women's health care in these remote communities, touching on topics like limited access to quality maternal care and the importance and significance of community birth in Aboriginal culture.

Currently, Aboriginal women are regularly forced to experience birth without the presence and support of family members and community. The removal of birthing support from communities jeopardizes cultural practices specific to birth that provide the mother, infant and family with a strong sense of identity, promote community cohesion and enhanced resilience, each of which contribute to overall health and well-being.



The SOGC's position is firmly in favour of initiatives and projects promoting the return of community births for low-risk pregnancies. However, the statement is clear that certain criteria are essential to ensure the safety and

success of returning birth to Aboriginal rural, and remote communities.

Doing so will require great collaborative efforts between Aboriginal women, community leaders, and health-care practitioners, both in the rural communities and at referral hospitals. The SOGC and the Aboriginal Health Initiatives Committee hope that improved partnership and communication between Aboriginal, medical and political organizations can lead to the adoption of a holistic, multidisciplinary, culturally-competent approach to birthing. We will continue to work in partnership toward an equitable future for the Aboriginal women of Canada.

For more information, please consult the December issue of the *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, or read the policy statement online at [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org).