



MIDWIVES
of
HEADWATER HILLS

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NOTICE TO CURRENT CLIENTS

This letter is to notify our clients that Midwives of Headwater Hills will temporarily stop providing midwifery services at Headwaters Health Care Centre as of May 1st, 2011 due to a lack of hospital privileges for all midwives in our practice.

Currently two of our midwives hold full privileges and our third midwife holds locum privileges at HHCC. Despite over a year of sustained efforts to obtain full privileges for our third midwife and get approval for privileges for additional midwives, full hospital privileges for more than two midwives at Headwaters Hospital are not in the immediate future. Though the Ministry of Health has acknowledged the need for a full group of midwives in Orangeville and has provided funding, HHCC does not recognize that more than two midwives are needed. Opposition to midwifery privileges has come primarily from the obstetricians in this community.

We require more midwives in our practice in order to:

- a) meet increasing demand for midwifery services in Orangeville and surrounding area
- b) ensure adequate coverage for weekends off and periodic holidays
- c) ensure a reasonable pool of midwives to safely serve labouring women in situations involving midwife illness or fatigue, and inclement weather, and to prevent midwife burn-out

Currently there are three midwives in our practice, and they are continuously on-call 24 hours a day for 3-6 weeks at a time. Most midwifery practices in Ontario are groups of 4 to 12 midwives working together as a team. Our current situation is not normal or healthy on a long-term basis for our midwives, and is not in the best interest of our clients. It is not possible for us to continue to offer births at HHCC unless all of our midwives hold privileges. If, for example, a midwife with privileges was caring for a woman at HHCC and the labour was very long, another midwife would need to come to provide relief. If the other midwife did not have privileges, our midwifery group would be unable to continue caring for her. Other situations where this could happen include simultaneous births or during midwife holidays. We wish to provide continuous and reliable care to all of our clients and cannot do this without hospital privileges for all of our midwives.

As of May 1st, 2011, until full privileges are approved for all midwives in our practice, we will not be offering maternity services at HHCC. We will instead be offering midwifery attended births at home and at Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Fergus, where all of our midwives have privileges. Like HHCC, Groves is a level 1 facility offering maternity services to low risk women. There is 24/7 access to an obstetrician, cesarean sections and epidurals as well as a group of experienced doctors to tend to any newborn concerns. Groves Hospital has been very welcoming to our clients and is just 20-30 minutes from Orangeville.

Please know that your midwives will continue to work diligently to obtain hospital privileges at Headwaters for all midwives as soon as possible. We hope that you understand this difficult situation. Your voice is extremely important in assisting us in our efforts. Please fill out one of our pre-prepared letters to Headwaters Hospital, or write your own letter expressing your right to access midwife-attended births at the hospital of your choice. You may wish to encourage your family and friends to write letters as well. Our practice administrator will be happy to mail your letters for you free of charge.

We will keep you updated as the situation progresses. Thank you for your assistance and understanding.

Sincerely, Midwives of Headwater Hills