

**MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION**  
OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

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# NWT residents opinions on midwifery 2024

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A SURVEY BY THE MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION OF THE NWT

## NORTHERNERS SAY: STOP THE CUTS, MIDWIFERY NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE!

While Cabinet proposes eliminating half of all Midwives, **including a Midwife position in Hay River**, from the health system, Midwifery has taken centre stage in the public conversation.

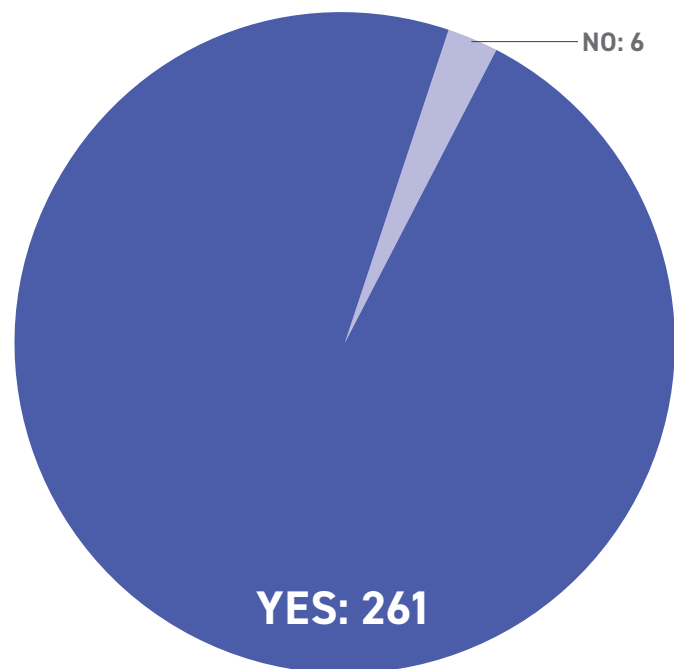
# NORTHERNERS DON'T WANT THE CUTS

(AND IT'S NOT JUST YELLOWKNIFERS)

Of 267 who took part, **about 44%** were from outside Yellowknife.

Here's what they had to say about whether Midwifery should be more widely available:

**Do you think the availability of midwifery services should be more widely promoted and accessible to pregnant people?**

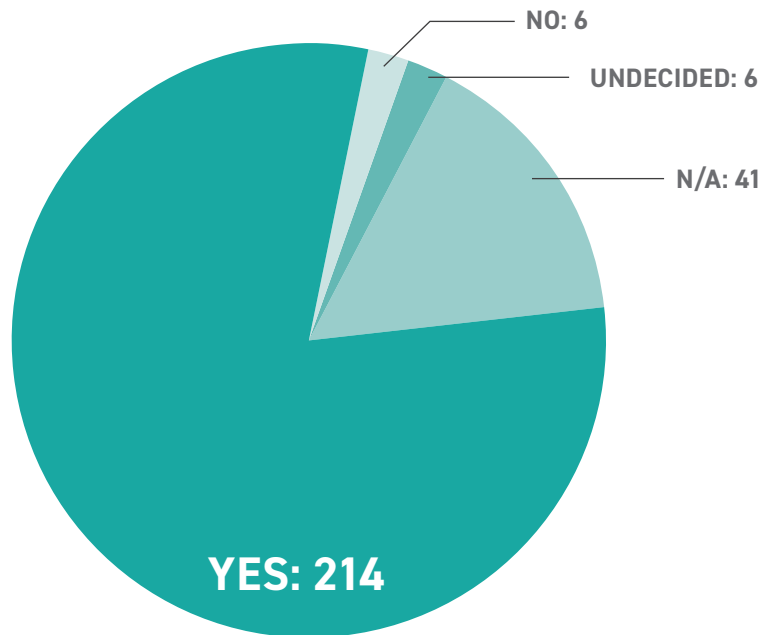


That makes sense - because it's a territorial Midwifery program being cut, not a Yellowknife one, with a loss of Midwife leadership in Hay River (**leaving Hay River with one less Midwife**). It would be a loss for a program which has **already benefited communities outside of Yellowknife** - like Behchoko, which had clinic with Yellowknife Midwives weekly.

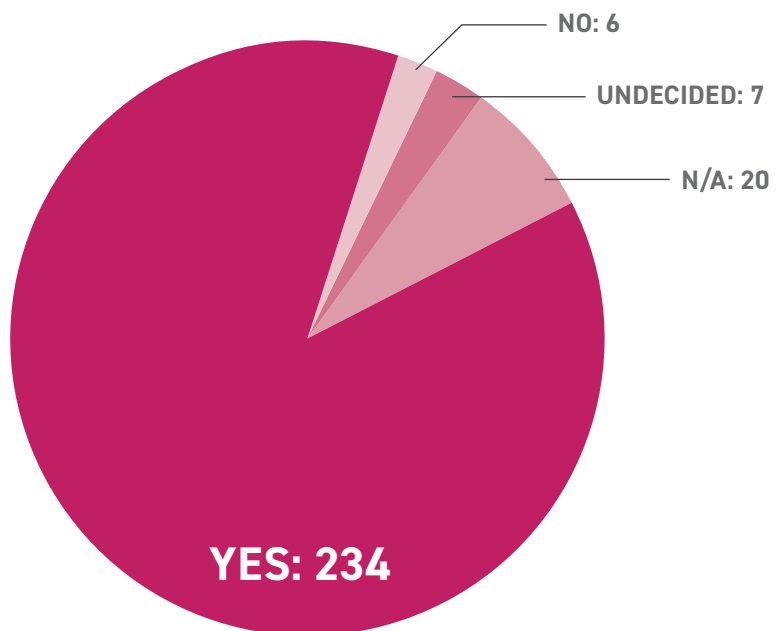
## NORTHERNERS WANT TO USE MIDWIVES FOR MORE BIRTHS

When asked whether they'd consider Midwives in future pregnancies, Northerners were overwhelming in their support.

**Would you have chosen to use midwifery services in the past if you had the option?**



**Given the option, would you use midwifery services in the future?**



That makes sense - because when surveyed about the quality of their care, parents [consistently](#) say they are [significantly more satisfied than](#) other forms of care.

## LISTEN TO NORTHERNERS' VOICES

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Here are some quotes from northerners who replied to the following question:

### **Why do you think midwifery is important in the NWT?**

Many expressed their feelings in terms which align very well with the Mandate of this legislative assembly.

### ADDRESSING THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

“To support birthing people, to revitalize traditional midwifery, to heal trauma and build community in this work. To help those working in the current system to expand their lense on how to support birthing people.”

“Midwives are an essential piece to helping Indigenous families reclaim traditional birth knowledge and practices.”

### SUPPORTING RECONCILIATION

“Midwifery is a traditional form for healthcare for many indigenous communities and is an act of reconciliation.”

Midwives are critical as a way of decolonizing the current healthcare system by way of allowing birthing parents more autonomy in the prenatal, delivery and postpartum care in the way they see fit.

“It’s a culturally safe, human centred approach that helps to decolonize the way care is delivered through making something natural, less medical. It also helps provide access through choice and physical care providers. Cutting midwifery is counterproductive to what the 20th LA mandate states it’s trying to achieve. It’s hypocritical.”

## ACCESS TO BETTER HEALTHCARE

“Where to begin? The relationship you build with your midwife, at the most vulnerable time in your life is irreplaceable. The sense of safety, trust and continuous care cannot be replicated in a typical medical setting.”

“Midwives help pregnant people to get the best care possible. With doctors already overwhelmed, midwives can take over prenatal care. I believe they are more suited for birth plans than doctors as this is what they do day in and day out. My family that has used a midwife swore by them. Their pregnancy would have been stressful without a midwife, which would negatively impact the baby. “

“After feeling pressured to attend the centering pregnancy program through my first pregnancy where I was forced to see 4 different doctors and 4 different nurses all with different opinions on my care and no true safe space to discuss issues and complications in private I believe that seeing a midwife in Edmonton during the evacuation finally showed me how different prenatal care could be”

“As a person who had to leave town December 2021 because OBS closed, having midwives available may have helped curb or prevent rerouting Nunavut families and NWT families.”

## DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE PROPOSAL

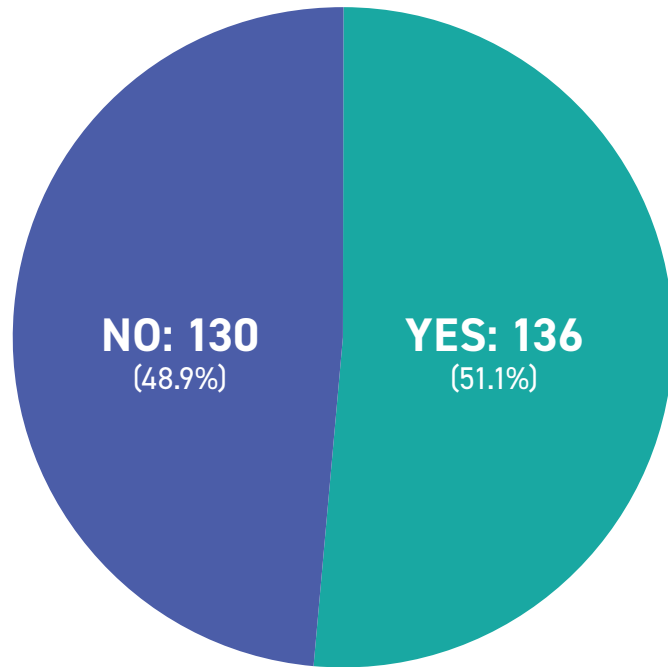
“Pregnant women need the support and the medical system is not able to provide the same level of care they do every time I tried to get a midwife they were already busy with other and couldn't take more patient. We need more not less! Do not cut funding!”

“If the GNWT gets rid of midwives, I'm going to be sorely disappointed in my government.”

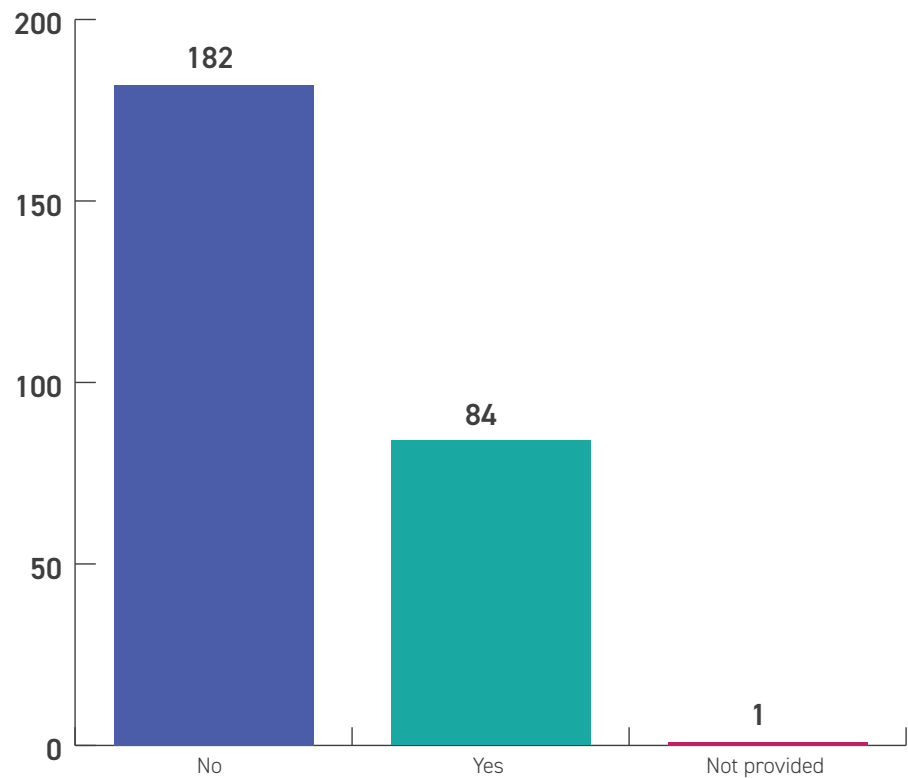
## ADDITIONAL SURVEY DATA

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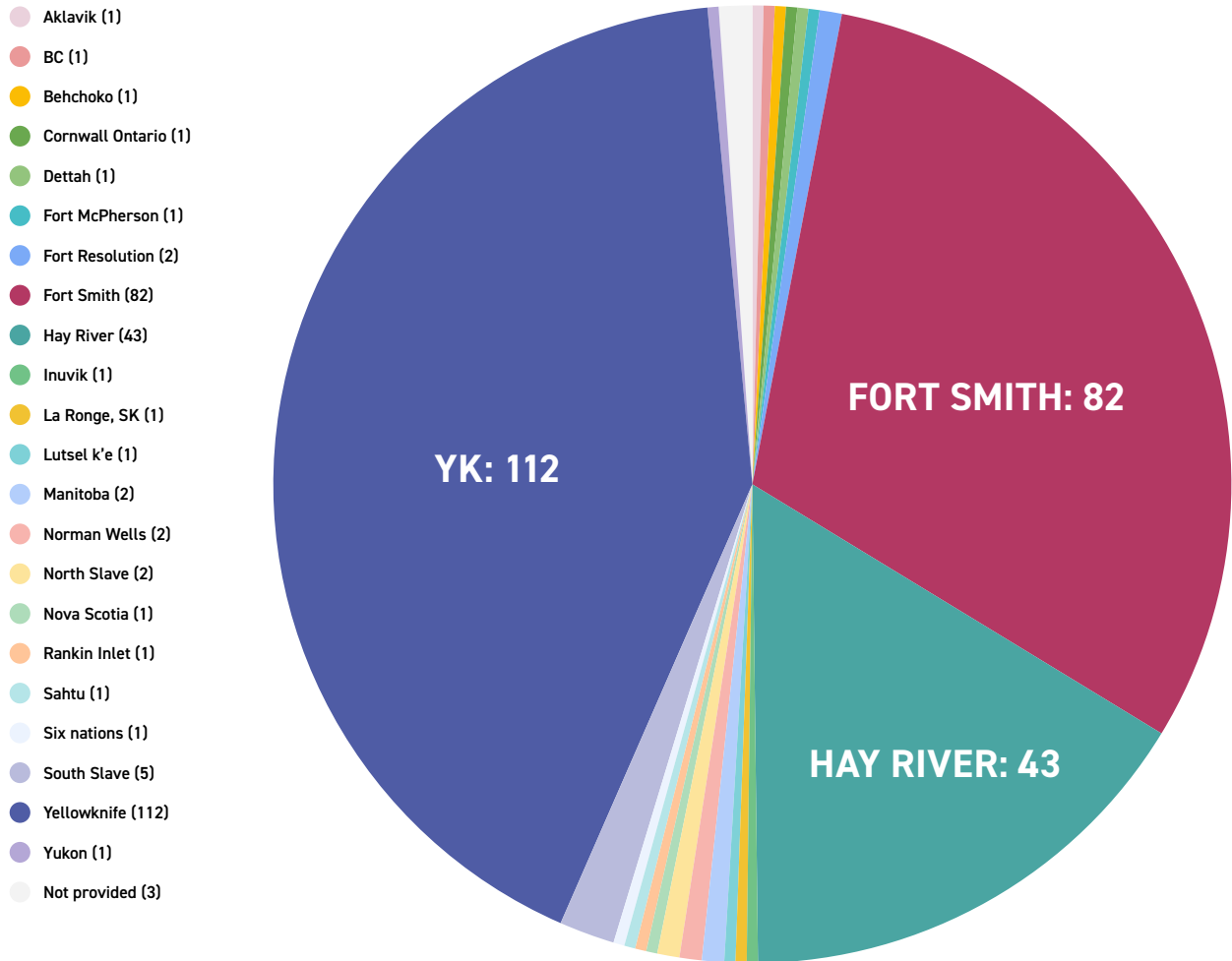
**Have you used midwifery services before?**



**Do you belong to a First Nations, Inuit, or Métis community?**



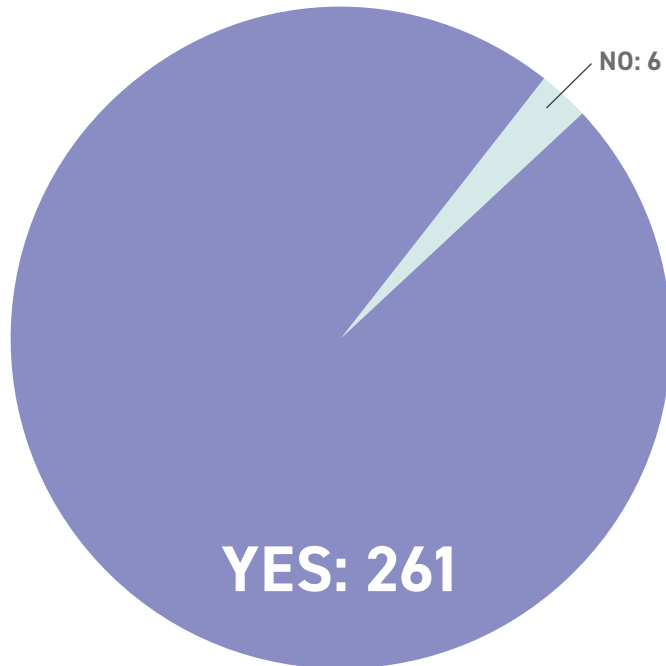
## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF RESPONDANTS



## DO YOU THINK MIDWIFERY IS IMPORTANT IN THE NWT (WHY)?

### YES (RESPONSES - ALL DATA)

- We must prioritize women's health care in the North as there are very limited options. This is an incredibly important service and we don't want to lose young families to southern parts of the country where they can easily access services such as this
- Midwives are essential, they advocate for birthgivers and their babies
- Midwives can provide holistic and culturally appropriate care to those who otherwise wouldn't have it available.
- It is important because it provides the best care possible for pregnant people and their babies.
- Yes, I think midwifery is important
- Provided essential care for not only babies but for postpartum mothers for 12 months.
- Women need options. The medical model is great for high-risk pregnancies and complicated deliveries, but is unnecessary and sometimes harmful for healthy women with uncomplicated pregnancies and deliveries
- Providing alternative options to families during pregnancy, birth and post partum, as well as midwives filling gaps in services such as the nursing shortages.. as a person who had to leave town December 2021 because OBS closed, having midwives available may have helped curb or prevent rerouting Nunavut families and NWT families.
- Midwifery in the NWT is important because without birth life is non existent. Although birth still happens without Midwives it is key to understand the vast difference between doctor led care and Midwife led care. Midwives prioritize clients and their needs and approach each family in a customary way. How people need midwives to help provide that one on one care and build healthy relationships and support healthy families.
- To help support child birth
- Because it will allow more mothers to deliver in their communities
- Safer more natural prenatal, l and d and postpartum care.





- Women's health support is hard to access. Pre-natal, pregnancy, and post-natal support is detrimental to everyone's wellbeing. Love grows brains and healthy/happy humans. You have to be cared for to care for others, you have to have support to give support, we're literally carrying the next generation of life. They say a child needs a village, moms need support too. What to expect while you're expecting, when having to leave your community to give birth, and after care. Living in the NWT is isolating enough, we need the access to the care NWT midwifery provides to their clients. If you've had children or planning too, you've probably been a client. The undeniably amazing support they provide is detrimental to success of giving families the tools, support and foundational knowledge to be good parents. We need midwifery and more access to its resources, not less.
- It's important to support the understanding and knowledge of pregnancy that endures physical and emotional health concerns and conditions to make a successful pregnancy longterm.
- Because we have limited doctors in NWT and it will be a huge help to have midwives to prevent future closure of obstetrics again just for this reason. Midwives are a huge help in terms of supporting mothers and their families throughout the pregnancy and postpartum.
- Pregnant women need the support and the medical system is not able to provide the same level of care they do every time I tried to get a midwife they were already busy with other and couldn't take more patient. We need more not less! Do not cut funding!
- Midwife provide support and care to expecting mothers and are a tremendous help throughout the pregnancy and even after. Every expecting mother should have the option to have a midwife.
- Tailored support for pregnant and birthing people. Increased knowledge leading to better outcomes for pregnant and birthing people. Reduction of pressures of workload on physicians in the north.
- "Midwives help pregnant people to get the best care possible. With doctors already overwhelmed, midwives can take over prenatal care. I believe they are more suited for birth plans than doctors as this is what they do day in and day out. My family that has used a midwife swore by them. Their pregnancy would have been stressful without a midwife, which would negatively impact the baby. Midwives can travel where doctors can't or don't want to. It is much easier for them to preform house visits, rather than having to bring a newborn in.

If the GNWT gets rid of midwives, I'm going to be sorely disappointed in my government. "

- It allowed me to stay close to home up until I had to deliver in YK due to complications. They are such an amazing asset to our healthcare team!
- Supporting midwifery programs means supporting in community births, which allows pregnant people to give birth around their support structures and save the cost of flying birthing people out of their communities to a larger centre.
- Absolutely important to our world and the future generations of children, teens and adults. Once a baby is born through the the hands of a midwife, their utmost care goes on further for baby and mother thrive. There is a deeply rooted connection between mother and midwife and baby and midwife that cannot be found anywhere else. I've had 6 children at the hands of a midwife and have experienced three hospital births with nurses...there is absolutely no way for mothers and babies to feel cared for in a hospital. The genuine care comes from a midwife. This is how we establish a better world for our future generations, from birth, with care from a midwife. If the GNWT knows what's good for them, then this is it because they, and their loved ones, were once babies too.

- Absolutely
- Midwifery is a vital part of our health care system. They provide expert care for pregnant people in their communities, and as healthcare is moving toward utilizing these professionals more and more...we cannot stall this expansion. We need to be able to recruit these professionals now. As someone who wants to have children in the near future, I want midwifery care whether I decide to have my baby in the community or in Yellowknife.
- Amazing service that supports mothers and mothers to be. After having 2 babies, 1 not in the NWT, I can say that my experience with midwives in the NWT for my 2nd baby made the process so much easier and accommodating. I wish I had that service for both of my pregnancies.
- It's a human right to have choice of care provider. Midwifery care is proven to benefit birthing people and their newborns.
- Midwifery is exceptional maternal healthcare. I had midwives for both of my births, and i felt so empowered and supported by my team of midwives. The quality of care before, during, and after birth is incomparable. In addition, there is a critical need to expand (not decrease) midwifery care in the NWT, particularly Indigenous midwifery as part of reclaiming traditional practices that were lost or access to was strained through colonization. We need to support communication midwifery education and training programs in the North for the North.
- It important for families living here and also for job creation and retention in the NWT
- It allows mothers to stay in their home communities where they have access to family and friend support systems.
- Informed choice, comprehensive and holistic care, connection with community priorities for health and wellness, body sovereignty and reproductive justice
- After feeling pressured to attend the centering pregnancy program through my first pregnancy where I was forced to see 4 different doctors and 4 different nurses all with different opinions on my care and no true safe space to discuss issues and complications in private I believe that seeing a midwife in Edmonton during the evacuation finally showed me how different prenatal care could be - person centered care where you are heard rather than fear mongered by doctors and nurses just "checking a box" in the day to day operations.
- This is an important resource for pregnant people and families in the NWT. It is available everywhere else in Canada.
- They are important because pregnancy and delivery are both difficult and stressful so women need care from essential workers as midwives during those times .
- Midwifery provides critical care to women during the most vulnerable time and experience of their lives. The relationships they form with patients is essential for the quality of care they provide. Having that relationship made me comfortable to ask questions and have discussions I otherwise wouldn't have, which allowed me to have a better informed and safer pregnancy. It was also a crucial support for my mental health during postpartum. I honestly cannot explain how important and valuable a role my midwifery program has played in my childbearing experience and my life. We literally chose to stay in the NWT to have our second child because of the quality of care midwifery provided.

- Pregnancy/birth/postpartum care is already VERY lacking as is. I have experienced downfalls of this personally, and it can be detrimental to women's health, both physically and mentally. We need more access to care, not less. I want my daughters to grow up and have access to care that would help them have safe and healthy pregnancies.
- Better care for women and infants
- Yes, extremely important in the NWT and especially the smaller communities.
- Yes, extremely important especially in the smaller communities
- Decolonizing health care means returning birth to communities from which it has been stolen. Midwives are an essential piece to helping Indigenous families reclaim traditional birth knowledge and practices. Safe birth cannot occur in northern communities without skilled attendants.
- To educate and assist women with pregnancy and labor and beyond
- Access to information for pregnant and postpartum mothers, support in hospital, support during pregnancy, support during postpartum period, access to healthcare provider while pregnant.
- It's a culturally safe, human centred approach that helps to decolonize the way care is delivered through making something natural, less medical. It also helps provide access through choice and physical care providers. Cutting midwifery is counterproductive to what the 20th LA mandate states it's trying to achieve. It's hypocritical.
- It gives pregnant woman the opportunity to stay in their community until birth, instead of being sent away for minimum 3 weeks to have the baby somewhere else without loved ones by their side unless it's at a cost. They're also amazing support for women going through pregnancy loss, difficult pregnancies, and more.
- I have birthed 3 children in Fort smith, 2 of which were in my own home. Midwifery is very important to all communities especially my own because the care is unmatched. The care I received from each midwife that helped me was genuine, respectful, supportive, and always always as I wished with my consent. They always made sure me and my family was comfortable with each decision and concerns were always addressed. I loved being able to see the same midwife for all babies for the entire duration of a pregnancy, which helps build up the relationship, and being able to be vulnerable with them. And knowing that she was always there for me. As an Indigenous mother I see how valid a midwife is to the community, she builds a foundation for moms and families, they will also support whatever traditional teachings you have personally without judgment. The midwife's teach new moms it's okay to reach out to other moms, and build connection. Then we become a stronger community.
- It is the ONLY time I have felt my health was being monitored or supported in my life living here in the NWT, I would NEVER have had 3 children if I didn't have the support of the midwives. They made me physically, mentally prepared to raise a healthy baby from pregnancy to the first year. I wish I could STILL go to the midwives for my health, but I can't.
- Midwifery is a traditional form for healthcare for many indigenous communities and is an act of reconciliation. Not only that, but in a territory where health services for parents is limited in many communities, midwifery helps fill the gap.

- Where to begin? The relationship you build with your midwife, at the most vulnerable time in your life is irreplaceable. The sense of safety, trust and continuous care cannot be replicated in a typical medical setting. Birthing in my home community (3 times) was an experience I treasure, keeping my family close at a time when they are needed most!
- With little access to other services in the North, the midwifery program makes pregnancy comfortable
- Greater support, more woman/person centred care, keep people out of hospitals where possible/ preferred
- “As an early childhood educator, it is clear to me that the health, wellbeing, and development of the child is deeply interconnected with the care for their pregnant parent and other caregivers, during and after pregnancy. Receiving responsive, holistic care during pregnancy, particularly for Indigenous communities, can enable improved health and well-being for an entire family unit, likely resulting in minimized need for supports and services later. Midwives are essential in the network of services available during pregnancy and their work, alongside other birth and pregnancy workers, do not just impact the lives of “pregnant mothers” as many often claim. They support the family unit, the child, teams of healthcare and community practitioners involved in supporting pregnancies, and the work of others who will later support these families, such as early childhood educators like myself.

The priority to improve early childhood education and development services is interwoven with services that support infants and pregnant parents. This cannot be a give and take, especially in light of accompanying budget cuts in education. If the GNWT is willing to claim they prioritize young children in the North, they must be willing to demonstrate that they prioritize parents experiencing pregnancy and post-natal care, as it is the most foundational time for a young child and person moving forward into parenthood. Having access to choice in healthcare services is the right of a pregnant person, and must be made possible by decision-makers in legislation. I urge you to reflect on the daily realities of those impacted by the loss of these services, and reimagine these budget cuts for what they are: devastating and harmful.”

- Midwives provide care before, during and after childbirth. Women should be able to choose to have a baby outside of the hospital and they should be able to continue make this choice.
- We already lack local doctors the more people who can support pregnant people the better
- It is not only important, it is vital. I personally have had a great experience with midwifery.
- Builds healthy and safe communities. Important rural care for pregnancy. Decrease medical costs. Decolonial and traditional values
- If we had midwifery in Yellowknife and the NWT it would help the healthcare system not be overwhelmed. The women that want to have a safe home birth would have that available. If families in other small communities could have homebirths they would save costs of travel to Yellowknife or Edmonton.

- Midwifery is extremely important to the NWT due to the remote nature of the North and an often lack of access to consistent doctors. Midwifery is also intrinsically connected to Indigenous culture and offers a more culturally inclusive birthing experience for women. Midwifery builds closer relationships between the healthcare provider and patient as well as empowering women to be able to choose their birth plan such as home births or even just giving birth in the community closer to family and loved ones.
- Pregnancy is not a disease. Midwifery supports educates and facilitates all aspects of pregnancy. It provides culturally relevant care for women and families
- women choices, in community birth, decolonization of birth, more efficient and supportive
- To bring birthing back home
- Birthing in our home community on our own terms is a right
- To support birthing people, to revitalize traditional midwifery, to heal trauma and build community in this work. To help those working in the current system to expand their lens on how to support birthing people.
- Midwifery is vital in the north due to the difficulties communities may have with reaching a hospital to give birth, on top of that it can be very important culturally and taking funding from an already heavily underfunded program which sets deep roots in indigenous culture is despicable.
- Yes
- Because evidence shows better birth outcomes when midwives are involved, and midwives are awesome
- Continuity of care is very hard to come by in today's healthcare reality and having midwives to help birthing people through the entirety of their pre and post natal journey is extremely valuable and needed.
- Midwifery is essential to continuous care for mothers and their babies in the north. We do not have other consistent care!
- It is an essential service
- It would aid in staff shortages of Territorial Hospitals. The fact that we had to send women in YK to give birth in Edm in the recent 2020s due to staff management issues was a disservice to the NWT. We need to do better.
- "Midwifery keeps mothers and families together in their communities. It promotes culturally safe environments and a better understanding of what mothers require during their pregnancies and post natal.

Without births in communities, the balance of life cycles are skewed. In other words midwifery brings life to communities that would otherwise only have deaths and funerals.

Midwifery is crucial to life itself."

- Absolutely. Cutting the funds is completely unnecessary.

- It helps mothers and babies
- Very important
- Very important
- Reduces down women going into hospitals for birth (wish I had this option with my two kids); costs less than doctors birthing; allows families to stay together at home
- There are many small communities that could benefit from having a midwife. They would be able to be with their family while they are going through the pregnancy, navigate the birth plan, have support during birth and be able to do it at the comfort of their hometown or even home! Low - no risk pregnancies should be able to happen at the community in which the mother and support system live.
- To be able to provide a level of care that pregnant people in the NWT want or need. Having this option is beneficial to many families across the NWT.
- They can offer more comfortable and lower stress options for people giving birth who don't feel comfortable or supported in medical institutions. Can help people feel safer
- Holistic treatment is essential in the Nwt. The gnwt is saying they want to have more holistic treatment for clients and patients- yet the midwife program is the first program that really does that for gnwt. It's integral for families to have this service. I would 100% rather have access to a midwife in community for if/when I have children. There is no replacement for the genuine care and support midwives provide.
- Midwifery carries a traditional practice of care to indigenous woman in our territory. Midwives have carried our communities on their back for centuries, not only in caring for woman and babies but being great sorces of knowledge to help heal communities as a whole. The government should be ashamed in its self for ever considering funding cuts at this level. What shame they have brought to woman as a whole.
- "Midwives are critical as a way of decolonizing the current healthcare system by way of allowing birthing parents more autonomy in the prenatal, delivery and postpartum care in the way they see fit.

Midwives allow for more mothers to stay in their communities, connected to supports.

Midwives are highly trained and provide continuity of care allowing for empowerment of parents who use their services. "

- Care for pregnant and post partum people is so important, and lacking in the NWT. People deserve timely, compassionate and culturally relevant care.
- In a territory with often limited healthcare resources, these primary healthcare providers are vital to the well-being of expectant mothers and their babies. We need to INCREASE funding for this service into communities. Flying women to Yellowknife, or flying YK women to Edmonton, due to lack of basic hospital resources is unacceptable and can be avoided by supplementing midwifery services.
- Midwifery provides women and babies with excellent care. Eight of our grandchildren were birthed with midwifery care followed by excellent post natal care . We and our children have loved and benefited from midwives.

- because the north in general needs more supportive services, especially to pregnant ladies and their children.
- Yes
- midwives provide quality care throughout a woman's pregnancy, during labour & in the weeks following birth, which is important in every single community in the nwt.
- So important to get specialized care in our home community. The midwives quite literally saved me while I was newly postpartum. I felt so supported and cared for.
- Close and accessible services and support in a period of someone's life where there is a lot of unknown and insecurities. It is important to have this support so women don't have to go away from their families and support system to have medical follow-up during their pregnancy and to not be forced to deliver away from home. When I was pregnant, there was a lot of questions and insecurities, the midwives in Fort Smith were available and I had easier access to them than I would have had with a doctor. They gave me a way to contact them outside of our appointments and were doing regular follow-ups with me.
- It's important, to have options when giving birth so that the birthing parent is supported in the way they want to improve outcomes for the birthing parent and the child.
- Better outcomes for mom and baby, we don't have primary care doctors, cultural safety
- Because being able to birth in your own community is an important step towards reconciliation for Indigenous peoples. Also, having a midwife statistically means you are less likely to have unnecessary medical interventions during birth, whether at home or in the hospital. Continuity of care from prenatal to postpartum is also extremely important and this is facilitated by midwives.
- To bring birth back to communities, where Indigenous people can give birth on their Land and closer to their families/cultures
- It offers another option for birthing people in NWT for their antenatal care. It also is a traditional practice that can offer cultural care to communities that may not receive the type of care they want at a traditional hospital. I want to use a midwife when I get pregnant in the future as the hospital staff in YK are overworked, understaffed, and cannot offer personalized care.
- It provides another option to birthing people for their antenatal care. Midwifery offers the opportunity to personalize your birthing journey to include cultural and holistic practices. With an overworked and understaffed hospital in YK, you can't really expect personalized care and honestly can experience trauma by the staff due to cultural insensitivity and prevalent racism in the hospital system if you are not white. As someone who is a person of colour, I plan to choose midwifery in the future so it is essential the option exists and funding is adequate for these services to exist.
- While pregnant, my husband and I tried to find and access midwifery care. We wanted to know that we had one person that we could trust and depend on for our pregnancy, and we were interested in a home birth, but we weren't willing to even consider doing so unassisted. Due to the lack of midwifery services in the NWT, we were repeatedly told that this was simply not an option and we were forced into a hospital birth where we simply had to hope that we knew the doctor on call and had a good relationship with her. We were fortunate to have a wonderful experience, however without improving midwifery care and access to midwifery services in the NWT, any subsequent babies that we have will also be born in a hospital, whether we want to or not.

- Yes!
- Helps promote healthy living, more care, builds relationship with care provider rather than a locum stranger
- Yes
- To support all people giving birth in a warm, gentle, caring, accepting environment without the stress and coldness of a hospital. In a hope to better maternal health and baby health as well as providing as positive of a birth experience as possible
- It is such an important access for women and families having babies. providing pre and post natal support
- Safety of birth for both mother and baby
- Champion, support and advocate for women to birth the way they want, provides essential services.
- Midwifery is essential service needed as a support in NWT, they are apart of the healthcare staff that are undermined in the field currently
- It gives the people in smaller communities to birth in their community and not shipped out.
- Having gone through a difficult delivery with tragic consequences, I felt a t the time and now that a midwife would have made a tremendous difference. Now with midwife programs being offered in Canada I feel it would be a step backwards for the NWT to cut back the programs. With travel from the communities for birthing, having to leave family and friends behind when we could have prenatal and delivery professionals traveling to communities. Which may lead to lower costs and less stress for new mothers.
- They play a vital role in the healthy growth of a pregnancy and a mother. Having support of the midwifery program for both my pre and postnatal care for both my children was a blessing. The amount of stress I would have had having to go to emergency or wait for an appointment to maybe see a doctor during my pregnancies would have been a complete nightmare. Have you experienced not being able to get an appointment for weeks at a time it's simply not acceptable. The GNWT can't seem to fix that problem if you cut midwife's you might aswell close down the territory. Growing Families will Leave!
- Incredibly important, I cannot stress this enough!
- “Midwifery is an approach to the pregnancy and birth experience that puts parents first. Many folks feel alienated by the Healthcare system during pregnancy due to inconsistency such as constantly seeing different health care professionals, having their cultural needs or needs based on marginalized identity ignored due to lack of resources or care, and lack of support after their child is born.

Midwives provide important personalized services to pregnant people while also taking pressure off of other medical professionals by filling in a gap in our overloaded medical system. Pregnant people and their families are much more likely to get their needs met and have healthy births when working with midwives. Indigenous and immigrant parents alone have faced so much distress, trauma, and mistreatment from a medical system that can't guarantee their birthing experience will include cultural consideration or even medical professional who speak their language. Midwives can serve those communities in ways that other parts of the medical system does not have the ability to.”



- Having access to a healthcare professional who specializes in women & women's health is needed in every community.
- C'est une chance donnée aux femmes un choix dans le type de services qu'elles ont besoin.
- It is critical care for women, women's health, empowering women, supporting families, caring for babies
- Provide physical and emotional support for Mothers and baby's in areas where they may not have help available/accessible.
- Healthcare is so scattered and inconsistent in our community. The midwives being there from start to finish of pregnancy through to postpartum is a huge need. Being able to see the same people who know your needs etc makes a big difference. We need the midwives in the NWT why the budget for this area is being cut makes zero sense at all. Wish the gnwt would start making smarter decisions. This is exactly the type of thing that makes people want to leave the North. Do better gnwt
- Midwifery is an invaluable service; ESPECIALLY in the NWT. Midwives are some of the most supportive and caring individuals and I would not have been able to cope with my forced evacuation birth without the support of NWT midwives. They checked in on me and offered any help or wisdom that they could.
- I think midwives are great. Many of my friends in different regions in Canada had super positive experiences with them. I wish I could've had access one holistic (including medical) birth practitioner during my first pregnancy/birth. I also know that research indicates midwifery leads to better outcomes for birthing people, especially those from marginalized communities. From that standpoint, midwifery is an important piece to reconciliation.
- Midwifery is SO important in the NWT as we they are so knowledgeable in pregnancy, birth and postpartum! We need services that the midwife's offer ... imagine having an urgent concern regarding your pregnancy and being told 'we have no appointments until X date' (which is usually 1-2 weeks out!) or having a pregnant woman sitting in emergency or outpatient with those carrying viruses, etc ?! It is not safe for mom or baby!
- Midwifery is crucial in informing, supporting, and advocating for every pregnant woman, new father, and baby. Doctors are people who want you to survive your pregnancy but a midwife is the one who cares for both mother, father, and baby before, during and after birth. They cover nutrition, mental health, physical health, breastfeeding (and bottle), and much more. They're compassionate and knowledgeable. They are available to answer your questions and concerns as quickly as you need without judgment. Not only do they have knowledge from their schooling but they're constantly learning from new sources and daily experience. Their minds are open to every individuals needs and do not make you feel there is one way of doing things because they take your feelings into consideration. I could not have had stress free pregnancies and births without my midwives. They answered my questions and supported me day and night. They never judged my sometimes unconventional opinions while respectfully giving me all the information I needed to make an informed decision. There are many of those important decisions before and after birth and they make sure you're able to think of each one. Five years into motherhood I am still weekly using tips I received from them. Their jobs are imperative to have and healthy family outcomes.

- Of course. It is a necessity.
- It reduces stress on women and families, gives them option to birth in their community, or close to it
- Like the Yukon, NWT is made up of many small communities....midwifery is so important to the families and Indigenous people to be able to stay home during the most beautiful time of their lives. Midwifery has such a wonderful continuum of care for our families and birthing individuals that NO hospital, doctor, OBGYN etc can provide. Midwifery is safe and provides a stable, compassionate, RELATIONSHIP with these families. It is something we are fighting so hard for in the Yukon! The NWT is leading such an important role in midwifery and how it can look across the country and especially for First Nation/Indigenous/Inuit families.
- For the health and safety of every mother and baby in the NWT. You will not receive the same quality of care from locum doctors when they are available.
- Yes
- Having 3 children and used midwifw
- I think it's an important tool to help decolonize and to help people access care where they otherwise may not feel comfortable or heard. I have a friend who had their concerns brushed off by doctors and it turned out those concerns could have cost their baby's life. It's so important to have specialized care for pregnant people.
- Midwifery is a practice woman have been doing for years, they have passed on this teaching from generation to generation. It's a way to reconnect to the traditional values of our ancestors before settlers arrived on these lands. Midwifery is an act of decolonization.
- To ensure all parents have the access to midwifery program should they choose to go with this type of care. To also support indigenous parents who want to or feel safer birthing in their community.
- Better outcome for babies. Support for lack of obstetric staff
- Helps families have children in their own communities without having to travel to Yellowknife or down south.
- They were VITAL when I was pregnant. I called the hospital to book an appointment for a check up when I learned I was pregnant and the hospital said there was no doctors and they didn't provide me any information or tell me where i could for support. I was completely terrified and considered leaving the NWT because I felt like it was completely unsafe to have 0 prenatal care. A friend told me to call the midwives directly and they were absolutely amazing. They booked me check up appointments regularly and they were so great I decided to have my child in Hay River. Unfortunately my circumstances didnt allow me to have my baby here but its such an amazing service. The doctors here are completely uninterested in follow up because they are all locums. The midwives in hay river are only consistent and reliable healthcare I have experienced in the NWT and Ive lived here my entire life.
- I think midwifery is important in the Nwt because it goes beyond the boundaries of what the hospital can do. The hospital is not affordable for younger families and for the kids doing it on their own. Also for those who live in communities around the capital who don't have access to the hospitals what are they supposed to do. We need midwives for the greater good, everyone deserves a safe birth.

- I desperately wanted a midwife for my children's births in 2021 and 5 weeks ago. The care of a midwife is better, with better outcomes. The current care model is overly medicalized even when it isn't necessary—birth is a natural process. It also has profound impact on the birthing person and the child, setting the tone for their health and relationship with the health system well into the future. Further, if we are committed to improving cultural safety and care, midwifery cannot be axed.
- We were all babies once.
- Midwifery is monumental to help increase positive outcomes for mothers and infants by providing expanded support during and after pregnancy in communities. The ability to monitor and even potentially allow home births is invaluable in a geographical setting where indigenous women often must leave their home communities and supports for "confinement" in Yellowknife due to lack of resources and associated risks to safety during pregnancy. Expanding the midwifery program and services to include prioritizing training and recruitment of indigenous peoples may be considered an act of reconciliation where the current system echoes colonial practices of removal of women and children from their home communities and culture. The standard of prenatal care even in the capital is poor and does not follow the standards set out in Canadian evidence based clinical practice guidelines. This can in part be seen as an issue associated with physician shortages. Midwives can help to alleviate the impact of physician shortages on prenatal and obstetrical care and improve health outcomes for both mothers and children, not to mention the cost effectiveness of investing in establishing high quality specialized care in communities having the potential to significantly reduce costs of accessing emergency and acute care services. I wished for the ability to receive midwifery services during my pregnancy and was told they were not available to me. I am certain that if I had the service available I would have had much different health outcomes when giving birth at 27 weeks. After multiple trips to the hospital and health clinic being told I was wrong about what I believed was happening with my pregnancy, I required an emergency c section to save my daughter's life. I was left behind unable to travel as a neonatal team transported my newborn to a Southern hospital. This never would have happened if I had the support and advocacy of a midwife during my prenatal care. I give this information with great vulnerability but feel that it is important to provide a personal example to help others understand why pregnant women and their infants NEED the support of a midwifery program in the north. The proposed funding cuts to the expansion of this program is unacceptable and does not have the best interest of the people of NT in mind and does not show commitment to reconciliation by changing systems and programs to reflect the needs of NT's indigenous peoples.
- Continuity of care is SO important while pregnant and my community has locum based providers other than the midwives. I would have had a far more disjointed experience as a pregnant woman in an already isolated community had it not been for the midwives. I also would not have had the chance to birth in my home community. Midwifery alleviates stress on an already overburdened STH and is an essential service to women in the NWT.
- better maternal health outcomes and less surgeries; closer to family/support networks; children of indigenous families will have a birth certificate that says they are born on their land - in the NWT and not in a southern province.
- provide options for pre and post natal care and reduce burden on doctors who don't have enough time already
- Yes very important for pregnant people to have access to adequate support.

- Midwifery is a safe option for low risk births
- The use of family doctors or gynecologists is nonexistent in the nwt, without midwives to guide and support the pregnancy journey what other options to mothers have?? To me having a midwifery service is absolutely essential.
- Just as noted above - Midwives in the NWT support birthing in communities that wouldn't otherwise have access to birthing services it SO important, as we already struggle with health care to smaller communities. To receive midwifery care and the choice to safely birth in their home community with the support of a midwife is a HUGE benefit to the communities, and family.
- Yes
- It gives families another option for birthing services. It would help support a floundering OBS unit, and hopefully provide families with more consistent pre and post natal care.
- Midwifery is so important. It is a traditional practice that has been completely eradicated and provides the holistic level of care that is needed in Indigenous communities. The medicalization of birth is problematic overall, but especially so from a cultural perspective. The stories I've heard of community members' experiences in the healthcare system during prenatal, giving birth and postpartum care are unacceptable. Given that midwifery services are vastly available elsewhere in Canada, it should be a basic right to have that option in the North where the majority of the population is Indigenous and relied on similar community care in birth in the not so distant past.
- "Health and Wellbeing of NWT Residents: With inconsistent or understaffed full time care available, a midwife fills a an important gap, ensuring patient care and health is prioritized.  
Cost Savings: an established midwifery program will in the long run save our GNWT health care costs. ie. travel/expense for all expecting mothers in communities, help to staff OBS in Stanton and relieve some spending on travel agency nurses, etc. etc."
- They provide a range of services to those who identify as female and to newborns and without their services, in some communities there will be nothing or it will be extremely difficult to access care.
- I think it provides confidence in the healthcare system to the mother, and a personal connection between the parents and the healthcare system.
- It contributes to essential health-based services for northerners
- I have experienced a birth with both the midwifery program and with the standard birthing process. My first experience was with the midwife program And I received excellent treatment, education on birthing and breast-feeding, mental health supports. My second birth was the complete opposite experience. Even though I had been through a birth before, I felt like I didn't know what the process at the hospital was. My babies life was putting in danger because of leaking amniotic fluid and a doctor that didn't identify it as a problem. I was not listened to and almost needed an emergency C-section. Thankfully, we were both healthy at the end, but I could not believe the difference in care between the midwifery supported birth and the regular birth. A new mother is far better prepared to care for herself and new baby through a midwifery program!! Both mentally and physically!!
- Yes
- Support services for mothers should be available, especially in smaller communities.

- Midwives are highly educated and passionately focused on perinatal health and wellness, they are an asset in the hospital helping with the workload and short staff of labour & delivery and OBS doctors, they are extremely important in providing the choice for home & community births.
- This relationship-based care directly contributes to a safe environment for marginalized people and the provision of culturally competent care.
- Yes
- I think midwifery is important the the NWT because it should be accessible to all northerners. People should not need to leave the territory just to see a midwife.
- They create connections with mothers and their families. The connections are so strong it's like they become a part of family. Doctors and nurses don't create that bond. Midwives have a holistic approach to delivering care to mom and baby.
- They care. They're such amazing people who have helped me throughout the time I had bloodwork's and appointments. They deserve to be recognized beyond recognition.
- yes
- Allowing women to safely deliver their children in their communities.
- YES!
- It supports traditional ways, provides support for women and families before during and after birth in so many aspects. It is the only resource families have here and without it, families would also be separated during a time when they need to be together.
- Birthing in your own community means access to consistent and ongoing care, access to support of family, and more culturally sensitive. Less travel to Yellowknife also saves money on medical travel.
- Without midwifery in our communities, women would be put at an extreme disadvantage. Midwives provide an extra level of care to pregnant women that otherwise would not be provided by general medical practitioners.
- People deserve access to traditional and culturally appropriate care when dealing with their bodies, their families and anything related to birth. Each group/community and family has its own traditions. They were almost eradicated by colonialism in the past, let's not let it happen again
- I feel very lucky to have received the before and after care of my two children from the amazing midwives in Fort Smith. I have experienced giving birth at the hospital in yellowknife, and felt forced to be induced because the doctor told me it was a "good time" because no one was on on the weekend. I have also experienced giving birth in Fort Smith where I felt valued and cared for through my entire labor and birth. No one should me made to feel forced to birth because it suits a hospital's schedule. Everyone should be able to birth in their community or regional centre.
- Yes

- Absolutely! If it wasn't for the midwifery program I could have lost my baby waiting to be medivac to Yellowknife or Edmonton. During an at risk pregnancy I would have had to be away from my family for weeks or months at a time if we didn't have the expertise of our midwives in Fort Smith. Again, without the midwifery program in Fort Smith and their home visits and check-ins, I would not have opened up about my struggles with postpartum depression. I would not have opened up to a doctor with whom I had not already established a rapport. The midwifery program is essential in our community and the idea of removing it due to budget cuts seems counterintuitive to the sheer cost of constantly flying pregnant women in Fort Smith to other health centres. This alone should suffice as reasons to keep our midwifery program alive and thriving in Fort Smith. I would add that investing in the mothers in our community is the greatest return on our investment as tax payers. Mothers who are cared for by our midwives in Fort Smith are supported through and post pregnancies. The emotional and physical wellbeing of the mothers in our community is worth investing in as their emotional wellbeing trickles down to every other member of our community. The ripple effect of closing this program will impact us for years will impact our addiction rates due to undiagnosed postpartum depression as services will be difficult to access and impersonal. In a territory experiencing a mental health crisis, the idea of closing our midwifery program to save money will in the long run cost us financially far more than maintaining the midwifery program. This decision is myopic and demonstrates the lack of understanding in the proven correlation between the emotional and physical wellbeing of mothers and the social and emotional wellbeing of their children.
- My grandmother was recognized for midwifery work in Cambridge Bay; my mother was birthed outside of hospital thanks to my nanas knowledge and learning. Insufficient birthing support in the north sends mothers and families further south, disconnecting them from networks, family, friends, community, their lives to give birth away from home surrounded by strangers.
- They have a very important role in the small community specially for a first time mom.
- We don't have enough care for woman as it is, most of us have to travel to Yellowknife or Alberta to give birth. For those that are able having the option of a midwife is incredibly important.
- Yes 1000%
- Health care and care for pregnant women in their home community
- The lack of medical resources here are already depleted. Midwifery is important for people to have access too
- midwifery services offer a level of care that is above and beyond anything I've ever experienced within the healthcare system. It allows families to stay in their community to give birth as well as to receive pre and post natal care.
- Yes
- Personal connection, safety, emotional support, protection, they specialize in pregnancy and birth and our communities are suffering from no doctors so we need midwives! I had midwives with my 4 boys and I couldn't imagine not having a midwife! They saves me emotionally and during the whole process for all of my pregnancies and birth. This is so important for women especially in the north!
-

- Midwife care provides exceptional health care before and after the birth of a child, for both the baby and mother. To cut such a large amount of money from the program and not expand it to Yellowknife is essentially saying that women and their health don't matter. Midwives provide sound medical advice and also work to ensure the health of parents and babies. To think of having to send families out of territory during such a fragile time is saying that the GNWT doesn't care about young families. This already a stressful time, but these cuts will add an unnecessary burden to families. If the GNWT hopes to grow its population, it sold care for families, otherwise they will leave. The care midwives provide is personal and attentive. As someone who has midwife care for two of my children, I couldn't imagine bringing a child into the world another way. I felt safe, informed and cared for, as all people going through pregnancy and birth should.
- Midwifery gives woman the opportunity to build relationships and connections within their community, benefiting mental health, networking and positive relationships. Midwifery advocates for Indigenous women to access programs that normally are not offered within the health care profession, especially with the huge turnover of doctors and nurses in the north.
- It is an essential service for maternal and child health
- "It enables families to remain together at the time of birth which is so valuable for family bonding"
- Because women deserve to be treated as women, not as patients with a problem only doctors can fix. Locum obgyns are detrimental to prenatal and post natal medicine!
- We lack sufficient healthcare that allows local mothers to give birth in their home community. Midwifery fills this gap. They care and are knowledgeable, therefore important and indispensable.
- "People have the option of giving birth with a loving and caring community around to support them. Traveling to give birth adds an incredible amount of stress on top of an already incredibly stressful experience. Having someone to support you afterwards can make a world of difference for parents.

There's so much local knowledge, skills, and experience in Midwifery, ending the program would stunt the sharing and inheritance of multiple lifetimes of work. "

- "People should be able to give birth where they feel safe and have support. When Stanton closed the obstetrics unit, and people had to travel to Edmonton to give birth, it highlighted how fragile our access to care is. Though services were restored in Yellowknife, for people outside of Yellowknife displacement in the unfortunate norm.

Also, the Indigenous midwifery program is also an incredibly important project. Indigenous people deserve access to culturally safe and competent care in their home communities. Right now we need more services for pregnant people, not less! "

- I think it helps some people where there are limited services, but midwives should not be a replacement for other medical professionals / supports. There is a lack of adequate healthcare supports across the NWT, which is a bigger issue than having more midwives in Yellowknife. Any cost savings should be redirected to attracting and retaining resident family doctors in smaller communities. Just adding one to a community like Hay River could save lives. I believe that we have lost a lot of lives due to not having proper (consistent, qualified) care.
- I can't believe this is even a question..
- yes

- It is another form of support for mothers and families.
- It gives women choices in a vital area of their family and health
- Midwives are valuable part of the healthcare system and indigenous culture
- “It is important because women would have to travel alone to Yellowknife, away from their family's, living in a hotel or other strange place, waiting to give birth. The money spent could be saved when women could stay at home and give birth in their own community.”
- Midwives provide much needed continuity of care to pregnant woman and support them after delivery
- They provide comprehensive perinatal health care to people especially in the underserved communities.
- Many people do not have a medical reason to leave their home community to give birth, and could do so in a more supported way were they able to stay at home. Midwives make options available to people who want or need them, and allow new parents the option of a more organic and stress-free birth.
- It allows woman to feel comfortable and heard. Having a regular midwife for care rather than seeing a different doctor each visit, builds trust and calmness which is important for mothers.
- It is so important for pregnant women and their babies! It provides women in Fort smith the option to give birth here and not leave their home, other children, and families. The midwives are caring, nurturing, and provide top notch care for expecting moms. It's so nice to see the same person throughout the entire pregnancy, instead of a different locum doctor each prenatal appointment. They provide a holistic approach to care and gave me the best experience during that huge time of my life. This is a hugely important service provided in the nwt that SHOULD NOT be cut.
- I believe it important as you have the same person with you throughout your pregnancy
- All pregnant people deserve to have a choice on who supports them during birth. Midwives are integral to providing care that is pregnant person centred, and culturally relevant. I left the territory to birth each of my children with midwives because I didn't feel that flying to a random city and getting a random doctor to deliver my babies was aligned with the way I wanted to birth. I paid out of pocket because the GNWT refused to accept that I had the right to choose the way I birthed. I am immensely privileged to have been able to do that. I want all pregnant people to be able to choose how and where they birth, and have the supportive relationship they want with those helping them. Indigenous people especially deserve the have access to care that is defined by them. I had such incredible and empowering relationships with my midwives and they even supported me from Ontario while I was early in my pregnancy in the Sahtu region. This made a huge difference to me because of the poor quality of prenatal care that was available in my community. Midwives are integral to our healthcare system and the GNWT should make every effort to continue expanding their services in the NWT.
- Allow expecting mothers to have best care in their communities during pregnancy and allow them deliver their babies there too with the support of their families and friends
-



- It is part of a traditional cultural event for the Dene culture. My great granny was a traditional midwife and used her Traditional knowledge and experience to allow mothers of all ages to feel safe and comfortable and that's something that Western Medicine will never match. With midwives, you have less of a barrier between yourself and the realm of Western institutions and can fully immerse yourself in the spiritual aspect of birth. Midwifery is a great and sought after alternative to an OBGYN and the experience is more sacred and overall free and allows mothers to experience life changing events with adequate support, and specialized care.
- They are trained to provide you with support and care during pregnancy, labour and birth. Midwives help you to stay healthy in pregnancy. If no complications arise, midwives are the main professionals who support you during a birth with little intervention. Especially in small northern communities with limited services!
- It's very important to me to live somewhere that values midwifery and the act of birthing and raising children. A community that supports this kind of work is a community that embraces matriarchal values and recognizes how child-bearing people need to be supported. Being pregnant, giving birth and recovering postpartum all can be very scary and having a midwife to support you throughout these stages has been raved about by all my friends who have experienced a midwife's support through their entire experience. This is a service that is already under-supported, and one I would rely heavily on if and when I decide to have children.
- Important so you can give birth in your home community surrounded by family and friends for extra support
- Absolutely! I've birthed both of my children there it is way more comforting and stress free then having to be shipped around to yellowknife or edmonton and the craziness and stress Dr.s cause
- Yes
- Because they help ALOT in everyday and every single day. My little one wouldn't be here If it wasn't for THE MIDWIVES, so please please don't shut down the midwives
- midwifery is important in the nwt because it provides better outcomes for babies and those giving birth while also lessening the strain on our healthcare system.
- Children are the future and midwives provide culturally appropriate care that is closer to home for so many mothers.
- This is such a fantastic program. In a region where health care is not always optimal and can cause real trouble sometimes. The midwifery program is a breath of fresh air. We live in a society where we see increasing issues with our younger generations. ADHD, anxiety, depression is massively on the rise. We know that the health and the well-being of a mother during pregnancy is essential to the well-being and the physical and mental health of our children. The midwifery program offers care at home, in our local communities, serving the marginalized and those who have a hard time getting proper care. Teaching young mothers what it means to be a mother and how to care for their unborn child. This would be a travesty and it would be a massive failure upon the government's part.
- Bringing birth back to the community. Trauma informed and safe birthing practices. Consistent care provider builds trusting relationship = improved outcomes for safe delivery of babe. Reduced post partum depression/anxiety from having a therapeutic relationship with your midwife.
- Oh yes for sure. Help 100% with everything.

- In my community birth would not be possible without the assistance of midwives, this decreases cost and stress on growing families. The journey of pregnancy without a midwife or a regular doctor would be dangerous as the medical professionals are not steady, not to mention that Hay River get the short end of the doctor stick when compared to every other community.
- Yes there are communities without doctors and the midwives ensure pregnant people can still access high quality care
- It is a choice for many women. Better wrap around service for Mom and baby.
- Very important
- ABSOLUTELY IMPORTANT not only for the birth but care before and after- these midwives are the primary go to person for A LOT of moms!
- I think it is important to not only have the prenatal care in the communities that they can offer but also the option for moms to give birth in their home community. Every woman should be able to choose where and how they would like to give birth. Also so they don't have to leave their community and home for extended periods of time while waiting to give birth.
- It's very important to the communities and for traditional knowledge overall. The midwives gives special care to communities, the prenatal, post natal, neonatal.
- Yes especially for being pregnant for the first time to learn about being pregnant and becoming a new mom
- We wholeheartedly embraced the Northwest Territories (NWT) Midwifery Program for the births of all four of our children, firmly believing in its significant benefits for their health right from the start. The program provided us not only with expert care but also with a sense of empowerment and involvement in the journey of parenthood. Through the guidance and support of our trusted midwife, we were able to navigate the nuances of childbirth and early parenting, feeling like active participants rather than mere spectators. This holistic approach fostered a strong bond of trust and friendship between us and our midwife, enriching our experience and ensuring the well-being of our children from their very first moments.
- Midwives serve the small, vulnerable communities that otherwise might not have adequate prenatal care to offer for their patients, which in turn puts a strain on the health care system by having to send patients to larger centres taking up appointment times and further government funds for unnecessary medical travel. Not only does it ensure women have adequate and safe access to medical care, it helps SAVE money longterm.
- These wonderful people support mothers and babies pre, during and post birth. Their level of care is unmatched and most supportive than any regular NTHSSA or HRHSSA support we received.
- Yes, this is a critical service for soon to be moms in the north. My great grandmother was a midwife in Fort Fitzgerald & her work along with others who came after her should not go unrecognized! This program will benefit so many families in the future and I hope it stay this way. Please do not cut funding for this incredibly important program!
- Because there's many people who want to give birth in their communities rather than coming to Yellowknife for birth
- Yes, very important.

- I have always wanted to have midwifery services available to me and that was not possible until 2013. After losing my son on June 27, 2013 and being 5 months pregnant with my 3rd child the hardest thing I had to do as a mother was step back into the hospital and give birth to my daughter 4 months later in the same hospital I had lost my son in. When I went into labour Nov 19, 2013 I was greeted on the L&D floor by a student midwife providing care, this midwife provided me endless amount of care and support from the moment I walked into L&D to the moment I left. The amount of support I needed as a grieving mother in labour is something that I cannot put into words. Having a midwife who was with me during every moment in my labour allowed me to have a calm, smooth, unmedicated, fast delivery that would have never been possible if it wasn't for the support I received from a midwife!
- Individualized care for moms and families. Seeing the same provider each time, building the trust and comfort. For moms who choose to give birth with midwives it's beneficial to see the same midwife for the whole pregnancy and into birth rather than a different dr every appointment and not knowing who your dr is gonna be for birth. Building the relationship and having the knowledge of a midwife vs a possible colonized dr. Also the racism point of view too, some drs are racist so it gives moms and families anxiety for their appointments not knowing what to expect and with a midwife they know who they are going to and our midwives are trained and understanding of all different cultures. My daughter is 4 and I still love running into my midwife (shout out to Vero!)
- Having support before during and after delivery is important. It is also important to have someone you trust work though this with you. It is also an important way of keeping people close to their support systems in their own community when giving birth. Leaving home - children and other family members to give birth is not even close to an ideal situation. Doctors are hard to come by up here - and they even had to displace all births to Alberta for a time period because there was no support for births in Yellowknife - let alone other communities. Cancelling the midwifery program with NOT save any money. Money would then be allocated to doctors and agency nurses - which would be more expensive than building and growing a midwifery program in the north.
- Lack of other professionals.
- Because it supports my Indigenous way of supporting mothers and babies.
- I consider midwifery an essential service for Northerners. As a mental health professional, I also can attest to how important midwifery is in maintaining or restoring safety for some women and families as it often is a trusted way for them to access health care and avoid further traumas. In our Hay River community, midwives have made the difference in so many pregnant women's lives and their babies. They also have provided information in a more accessible manner to youth and families in a time whereas sexually transmitted infections are on the rise. They promote safety in unstable, often scary, times. I would personally reconsider my choice of staying in the North if my access to midwifery was compromised as I am looking at starting my own family shortly. With all the lacks we have to cope with here, I would consider the loss of midwifery services as the last straw that broke the camel's back. They saved lives countless of times and they do hold a knowledge which is essential, especially in Indigenous communities. I would question how committed the NWT are to ensuring a safe and healthy environment, especially to their Indigenous population, and I would fear the burden that that loss would create. I sincerely do not understand how this service could even be endangered after all the evidences as to why it's crucial, especially in remote regions.
- This is a vital service to many mothers, children both pre and post-partum. Families need this service that so many midwives, clients, families have worked so hard to get to where we are.

- “Alleviating an already bogged down system Personal connection with continuous support and not just another locom doctor I’ve had three children in Fort smith with the midwives and I wouldn’t change a thing. Their expertise, knowledge and compassion made me feel safe and confident in my decision to stay”
- Specialized care for this population is what shapes the future of our people, the lives that will be created.
- Allows pregnant people to have dedicated care with the same individual throughout pregnancy and for the simple fact of being able to stay in your home community!
- They are the ONLY reason I felt safe to have my 3rd baby. I’m a very high risk pregnancy with history of c sections, uterine rupture and children in the NICU. I felt so safe and cared for by my midwives.
- They provide an important service
- Midwifery is Important and relevant medical care that saves lives and promotes healthy and patient-directed births. birthing people should have the right to birth in their own community with care tailored to their needs. It is a much less colonial way of providing perinatal care, and should be prioritized as such across the NWT, especially Indigenous midwifery.
- I think it’s a vital resource for birthing people of the nwt. It gives expecting parents guidance, support, knowledge.
- Access to health care is crucial for new mothers and their infants. If Fort Smith has any chance at a future, we need to give women and new families access to the proper chanelns to have children in town.
- They provide VITAL advocacy and consistency in support that is sorely lacking in all other areas of our health care.
- The health of a child starts in the womb. Having a midwife to ensure the physical and mental health of a mother-to-be is crucial. Midwifery is an upstream approach to health care, with health promotion and prevention. Which in the long term will save costs in the health care system. In other words, preventing illness in the next generations can save money and help grow a healthier society in the NWT. Midwives help women and families from prenatal health to the first year of life. Women are vulnerable throughout these times and having a midwife to support you throughout this challenging time is essential the health of families.
- It important to have options for uncomplicated births in the NWT
- Yes!
- “The health of a child starts in the womb. Having a midwife to ensure the physical and mental health of a mother-to-be is crucial. Midwifery is. an upstream approach to health care, with health promotion and prevention. Which in the long term will save costs in the health care system. In other words, preventing illness in the next generations can save money and help grow a healthier society in the NWT.  
Midwives help women and families. from prenatal health to the first year of life. Women are vulnerable throughout these times and having a midwife to support you throughout this challenging time is essential the health of families.”
- Yes, I think it’s very important.
- Yes

- A mother has to fly out to give birth and the family cannot fly out with her, it would be so much better if she had her family there with her.
- It takes some of the burden off of the health care system which is already short
- We need more support for mothers and babies during and after having a baby. We don't have enough care within our health care for new moms or moms to be in general. Specially in smaller indigenous communities. Lots of people are intimidated only seeing doctors that barely have time to see you about questions you may have about your pregnancy and giving birth. This support is truly needed for moms! More advertising and being told about it in doctors offices should be done. A lot of people are unaware of how important and helpful this program would be to moms and moms to be.
- Midwifery, particularly in our northern communities is extremely important for a variety of reasons. The first and most important being that it provides an imperative and unparalleled quality of care to women during the most vulnerable time of their lives. Pregnancy can be exciting but it is also scary, dangerous, and hugely transformative. The amount of learning required for new parents and the amount of care required for the safety of both mothers and babies is staggering and in depth. Thanks to our midwifery program we personally felt supported, educated, capable of making informed medical decisions, and well cared for both during pregnancy and in postpartum. Programs such as midwifery impact not just the women that use them, but our entire community. The care this program provides allows young families to grow and stay in small northern communities such as Fort Smith. It means that young professionals can actually lay down roots and stay in this community as they grow their families rather than staying only for a year or two before moving to larger, southern communities for better care. During my second pregnancy my husband was offered a job in a southern city and we chose to stay in Fort Smith BECAUSE of the care I was receiving with midwifery in Fort Smith. It was 100% the deciding factor. Our town is able to grow and flourish because of programs such as midwifery. Lastly, I think it is imperative to keep in mind that our midwives provide support and education to women about not just pregnancy. During my care they educated me on cancer screening (particularly breast and cervical), STI screening, birth control options, provided pap smears, and mental health checks. (In fact, I found their care and support was a huge help to me postpartum mental health and I honestly don't know how I would have managed without them). They help provide care to women's health in general. Which is something that often falls through the cracks in our health care system to begin with, but especially in small communities where we depend largely on visiting doctors.
- I wish I could of had the option for a midwife instead of my doctor. I feel midwives know their patients better and are not treated like "just a number"
- They provide comfort, personal care and more support than the medical doctors can with their busy schedules
- Absolutely
- Its hard in smaller communities when you can't get family doctors. Every visit is a new face. With the Midwife program, we see the same people every visit, which made it more comfortable, trusting, and welcoming
- They are a vital resource that provide an essential service. It's very concerning that the GNWT is even considering cutting the midwifery program.
- Because it's a support system for women who are pregnant and about to give birth.
- Yes

- Yes
- Two of my Daughters were home births with my Midwife, I find you build a relationship with your midwife than you would with a OBGYN. My first born was a obgyn and it was not a goof experience at all, he felt like a stranger and made me uncomfortable. My midwife felt more personal, met in the comfort of my own home and gave me the best experiences of my life in my own home.
- I think it's important to have multiple birthing options in Canada. A friend is a midwife down south and I hear of all the amazing and personalized care she provides to her clients/patients, and I wish that service would be available here. I also believe further midwifery services in the NWT would be so incredibly beneficial and empowering to community members. Having recently gone through my first pregnancy, I couldn't imagine leaving my home weeks before birth to deliver away from my house and friends and family. Community members deserve the option to not fly down to Yellowknife to give birth, and I believe midwifery is a very obvious solution to that issue.
- Birth belongs in our communities, access to resources and supports
- "Mothers can give birth in their home community, supported by family and friends. Midwives are able to give care before and after birth. Having the preexisting relationship makes the birth process less stressful."

#### NO (6 RESPONSES)

- replaces family physicians in communities where physician services are challenged.
- I think it helps some people where there are limited services, but midwives should not be a replacement for other medical professionals / supports. There is a lack of adequate healthcare supports across the NWT, which is a bigger issue than having more midwives in Yellowknife. Any cost savings should be redirected to attracting and retaining resident family doctors in smaller communities. Just adding one to a community like Hay River could save lives. I belive that we have lost a lot of lives due to not having proper (consistent, qualified) care.
- I actually think this is a wise cut to make at this time.
- I don't
- I don't.
- I dont