

SOGC Annual Clinical Meeting, Vancouver, June 22-27, 2006

## **Working to Save the Lives of Mothers and Newborns Around the World**

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**When: Thursday, June 22, 2006 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. PDT**

Each year, hundreds of thousands of women in low-resource countries die needlessly during childbirth. Most of these women could have been saved with inexpensive medical/surgical technologies we take for granted here in Canada. Compounding the challenges, in many of these same countries HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic levels, and its prevalence is increasing among women and young girls.

During the Annual Meeting of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada's (SOGC) 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting in Vancouver, leading health experts from across the globe will explore the role healthcare professionals are playing in low-resource countries in addressing HIV/AIDS and providing a safer mother and child scenario during the birth process.

### **Highlights include:**

#### **9:00 a.m. PDT**

**HIV/AIDS – a catalyst for women's sexual and reproductive rights:** Dr. Dorothy Shaw, MD, President Elect, International Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecology (FIGO)

#### **11:00 a.m. PDT**

**Ob/Gyn and HIV/AIDS Panel Discussion:** Representatives from ob/gyn professional associations in Canada, the United States, Haiti, Uganda, Guatemala, and Mexico will meet to discuss the challenges and potential rewards of integrating efforts to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic with efforts to provide safe motherhood and newborn health.

#### **4:30 p.m. PDT**

## **Canada's Leadership Role in Improving Women's Health Around the World.**

Keynote Speaker Dr. David McCoy, Co-Managing Editor of Global Health Watch, will discuss the role of Canadian healthcare professionals in achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals related to maternal and child health.

These sessions are open to the media. To set up an interview with Dr. Shaw please contact Patricia Robitaille at (604) 873-0080.

To register to attend these sessions, please go to the Media Desk on site at the Westin Bayshore, June 21-27, 2006.

### **SOGC Spokesperson: Dr. Dorothy Shaw**

Dr. Dorothy Shaw, a past-president of the SOGC (1991-1992) and the current President-Elect of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), is globally recognized for her work as an international advocate for reproductive rights and women's health. Her work has brought her to low-resource countries around the world, and she has been involved in national and international projects of the World Health Organization, FIGO and the Canadian Task Force on Violence Against Women.

Dr. Shaw is currently Senior Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs and Clinical Professor in the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Medical Genetics at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Shaw will assume the prestigious role of FIGO President in November 2006.

Dr. Shaw will be presenting a plenary on "HIV/AIDS – a catalyst for Women's Sexual and Reproductive Rights", and will be available to speak with media on international women's health topics and the SOGC's work to improve sexual and reproductive health worldwide.

### **About the SOGC and International Women's Health Program.**

#### **Backgrounder**

#### **Every minute around the world, one woman dies during labour or childbirth.**

The SOGC has been active on the international scene since 1998, when it integrated into its mission the importance of pursuing excellence in international women's health and promoting safe motherhood and newborn health throughout the world.

Since 1999, SOGC has conducted 61 interventions that have involved the participation of 115 volunteers doctors, nurses, midwives and other health professionals. SOGC has a roster of approximately 200 volunteers that are interested and available for international interventions

The main focus of these interventions is to deliver the SOGC's ALARM International training program, a "train the trainer" course for local healthcare professionals that addresses the main causes of maternal and newborn mortality. The ALARM International Program has been delivered in 17 countries, and is planned in five more, including: Benin, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Kosovo, Mali, Mexico, The Phillippines, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Yemen. Upcoming interventions are planned in Iraq (through the Society of Rural Physicians), Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Honduras, and Tanzania.

Since 1999 Canadian healthcare professionals have contributed approx. \$837,664 CND in in-kind contributions, through their volunteer time.

Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada, is the Patron of the SOGC's International Women's Health Program.

***About The SOGC:***

The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration, outreach and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals in the field of sexual reproductive health.

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