

<b>Date:</b>	<b>September 20, 2019</b>
<b>To:</b>	Acute care inpatient/delivery units/staff; primary care interprofessional teams; physicians - GPs and specialists (OBs, pediatricians, psychiatrists); midwives; nurse practitioners; specialized services; public health practice; Indigenous health; professional practice; policy office; education services
<b>From:</b>	Perinatal Program: Vanessa Salmons & Dr. Bill Kingston and Population & Preventive Public Health: Dr. Raina Fumerton
<b>Re:</b>	Immediate change in practice – End of MCFD birth alerts/hospital alerts

**Immediate Practice Change Update**

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) has mandated an immediate **end to birth alerts**. All physicians and staff will emphasize early and voluntary engagement of expectant parents in supports that enable the safety and well-being of the mother and the baby upon birth. This practice change was announced, and came into effect, on **September 16, 2019**.

Please refer to the updated Collaborative Practice [Protocol Agreement](#) between MCFD, Delegated Aboriginal Agencies and the Ministry of Health for practice guidance. Northern Health will provide orientation sessions by webinar and teleconference early next week. Please ensure a representative from your practice area participates in one of the orientation sessions.

**[Join WebEx Meeting](#)**

**Tuesday, September 24, 2019 10:00am | 30 minutes | Pacific Daylight Time (San Francisco, GMT-07:00)**

**Password: Tuesday**

**Join by phone:**

**1-877-385-4099 Code: 648-2632#**

**[Join WebEx Meeting](#)**

**Tuesday, September 24, 2019 3:00pm | 30 minutes | Pacific Daylight Time (San Francisco, GMT-07:00)**

**Password: Tuesday**

**Join by phone:**

**1-877-385-4099 Code: 648-2632#**

**Background**

This change in practice is in response to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, which noted the practice of birth alerts was discriminatory and racist based on the disproportionate rates of apprehension of Indigenous infants and children by child welfare agencies. The report also identified the need to examine the legal basis for birth alerts.

**Implications for Practice**

- Health care providers who work with expectant parents in the hospital will no longer receive a birth alert from MCFD about expectant parents about whom MCFD has concerns.
- Every person continues to have a responsibility to report a child protection concern(s) after a child is born as outlined in sections 13 and 14 of the Child, Family and Community Services Act ([CFCSA](#)).
- If your facility received a birth alert prior to this change in practice, hospital staff are advised to **not act** on the birth alert without parental consent.
- Health care providers are expected to continue to provide high quality services for pregnant women, infants and families with the following approaches: person and family-centred care, women-centred care, cultural safety and humility, harm reduction, and trauma informed practice.
- Health care professionals and primary care interprofessional teams will continue to provide universal services and enhanced support for vulnerable expectant parents and postpartum women, infants, and families, as outlined in the clinical practice standards listed below.
- Following the immediate implementation of this important practice change, all clinical practice standards will be updated to include the new protocol agreement and resources:
  - [Prenatal Services](#) 1-16-1-010
  - [Postpartum Services: Birth to Eight Weeks](#) 1-16-1-020
  - [Removal of Infants by the Ministry of Children and Family Development](#)

### More information

- Contact Vanessa Salmons, Perinatal Program Executive Lead  
[Vanessa.salmons@northernhealth.ca](mailto:Vanessa.salmons@northernhealth.ca)
- Questions and answers for health sector workers about change in practice regarding “birth alerts” (also known as “hospital alerts”) – attached document
- [Promoting Access to Breastfeeding in Child Welfare Matters: A Joint Special Report](#)
- [Ministry of Children & Family Development](#)

### Education

In addition to the orientation provided by the Northern Health Perinatal Program, MCFD will provide a more extensive orientation for relevant health sector staff. This orientation will be regarding voluntary prenatal intervention services, clarifying when there is a duty to report, implications for health care providers, and how MCFD and health care providers can work in collaboration to support expectant parents when there is need.

For further information regarding scheduling orientation sessions, local questions or discussions, please contact:

- **Northeast and North Central:**
  - Kerry Shinnors [Kerry.shinnors@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Kerry.shinnors@gov.bc.ca) or 250-255-6192
- **Northwest:**
  - Lori Hansen [Lori.Hansen@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Lori.Hansen@gov.bc.ca) or 250-632-7858