

April 21, 2006

## Maternal and Newborn Health Care in Iraq to be Improved With Canadian Help

**Winnipeg**– The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) today signs a Memorandum of Collaboration with the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada (SRPC) to provide technical expertise, knowledge and maternal and newborn health expertise for its international health initiative it is conducting in Iraq. The signing is part of the SRPC's Annual General Meeting being held in Winnipeg this week. It will be held in the Banquet Room on the Main Floor of the Fort Garry Hotel immediately following the luncheon at approximately 1:15 p.m.

"This agreement means that SOGC's tremendously successful ALARM International Program (AIP), which is designed to reduce maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity, will be used by doctors from the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada when they undertake their missions to Iraq," said Dr. Michael Helewa, President of the SOGC. "SOGC has already successfully brought ALARM International training to countries around the world, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to share this tool with other professional associations in Canada who believe, as we do, that enhancing women's health globally is vital to the health of societies."

AIP is a five-day training and mobilizing tool for health professionals involved in the delivery of emergency obstetrical care in low resource countries. It was developed in the mid-90s to contribute to one of its essential goals: to ensure a woman's right to survive pregnancy and childbirth, and to deliver a healthy child.

"Providing service to under-served people is what rural physicians do," says SRPC president Dr. Trina Larson-Soles. "This collaboration with the SOGC ultimately supports women in Iraq who continue to give birth despite unrest and our mission will support the doctors and midwives who assist them."

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**About ALARM International Program**

Skilled care saves lives.

The ALARM International Program (AIP) is a five-day training and mobilizing tool for health professionals involved in the delivery of emergency obstetrical care in low resource countries. The content of the ALARM International Program is derived from evidence-based medicine and is currently maintained by SOGC's ALARM International Committee. The AIP is endorsed by the Partnership for SM/NH and the World Health Organization as a tool to ensure skilled attendance.

The AIP focuses its education on the main causes of maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity.

**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.

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. It is the Society's goal to ensure that every woman has the right to survive pregnancy and childbirth and has access to the care she needs to deliver a healthy baby through a safe pregnancy and childbirth

For more information about the SOGC and all its programs, please visit the SOGC web site [www.sogc.org](http://www.sogc.org)