



Family Planning Does Save Women's Lives

FMWC says contraception needs to be part of Canada's Strategy to Improve Maternal, Newborn & Child Health

Ottawa (March 18, 2010) – The Federation of Medical Women of Canada (FMWC) opposes Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon's statement yesterday that birth control doesn't save lives.

It is widely accepted that family planning is a critical component of global strategies to reduce maternal mortality. Family planning, as a way to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and a means to time and space each birth, is key to saving lives. Canada has a strong history and international reputation for supporting contraception, reproductive health and reproductive rights. "If the government is sincere in wanting to improve the health of women and children in the world's poorest regions, then family planning has to be part of the tools given to women to improve their reproductive health and reduce maternal mortality", says FMWC President Dr. Andrea Canty. "For the government to state that birth control doesn't save lives is a bold decision to ignore hard core facts. It is a step backwards for both women's reproductive rights and Canada's international reputation".

The FMWC urges the Government of Canada to reconsider their position and to include family planning in their maternal health program. By excluding family planning, there will be even more pressures on already vulnerable health systems, devastating consequences on any attempts to implement maternal health programs, and tragic loss of millions of lives that could otherwise have been saved.

The FMWC is a strong supporter of women's reproductive rights as a critical element to ensure women's health. Reproductive choice is a basic human right. Canada should take the lead in defending and promoting every woman's right to healthy pregnancies, the number of pregnancies she desires and the spacing of these pregnancies. This must include access to contraceptives.

About the FMWC

Established in 1924, the Federation of Medical Women of Canada (FMWC) is a national organization committed to the professional, social and personal advancement of women physicians and to the promotion of the well-being of women both in the medical profession and in society at large. For more information, please visit: www.fmwc.ca.

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