

The Maternal Child Health Program (MCH)

The Maternal Child Health (MCH) Program supports pregnant Gitksan women and families with infants and young children, who live on reserve, to reach their fullest developmental and lifetime potential. This is achieved by providing access to a local, integrated and an effective MCH Program grounded in our culture that responds to individual, family and community needs in the Gitksan Health Society (GHS) service delivery area. The MCH program supports a broad approach to services in the GHS service delivery area that builds on community strengths including support from Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Nursing Services, Home and Community Care, Oral Health and Other Community-Based Programs. Developing evidenced-based models and approaches through investment in evaluation is also crucial to the program.

The MCH program aims for contact with all pregnant women and new parents, with long term home visiting for those families who require additional supports. Services through the MCH program include reproductive health, screening and assessment of pregnant women and new parents to assess family needs as well as home visiting to provide follow-up, referrals, and case management as required.

Objectives of the MCH program include:

- Develop a more comprehensive and integrated approach to MCH services on reserve;
- Identify opportunities to bring safe birthing options closer to First Nations communities.
- Increase participation of community members in planning and developing MCH services on reserve;
- Increase coordination of services for pregnant women and families with infants and young children who live on reserve;
- Provide access to a system of home visiting, screening, assessment and case management for pregnant women and families with infants/young children who live on reserve;

- Develop and/or use existing evaluation tools to measure progress in meeting short-term objectives

Community Health Nurses and Family Visitors provide services to pregnant women and families within the MCH program. Additional services may be offered by other health care professionals, early childhood educators, community volunteers, and Elders.