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MOTHERISK

TREATING THE MOTHER –
PROTECTING THE UNBORN

February 22, 2010

The Honourable Stephen Harper
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

Health Nexus and Motherisk would like to commend you for making maternal and child health the priority for the G8 Summit in 2010. This is a serious social issue internationally, as well as a direct health care cost.

Health Nexus and Motherisk are each celebrating their 25th year. Health Nexus is Ontario's leading bilingual health promotion organization, focusing primarily on child health, chronic disease prevention, inclusion and equity. Motherisk, a program of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto is Canada's expert on maternal-fetal medicine and toxicology.

We encourage the Canadian government to consider local issues and concerns in maternal child health, as well as developing a global plan to address maternal child health in the world's poorest regions. Our Canadian Perinatal Health Report documents higher rates of infant mortality in First Nation and Inuit populations, as well as higher rates of infant mortality in the northern areas of our country. Many of these deaths would be preventable through timely information and adequate services.

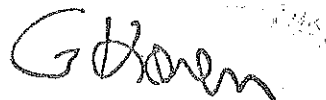
Information and specialized services are also critical to our ability to care for the mother, while protecting her fetus or newborn. Clinical research into the reproductive risk or safety of medications, infections and environmental exposures can ensure that pregnant and breastfeeding women have access to safe and effective treatment and care. It is equally important to ensure that all pregnant women and mothers experiencing substance use problems have access to specialized programs and support. Since 1985 Motherisk has worked to meet these important research and counseling objectives. Expanding these activities would benefit pregnant women and their children across Canada, and has the potential to improve associated health and social costs.

We respectfully offer our support as you prepare for the G8 this summer. If helpful, we could conduct a symposium or other forum on key issues of maternal-fetal health in Canada to coincide with other G8 or G20 activities. Please let us know if we may be of some assistance.

Yours sincerely,



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