

Moving Us Forward

A Strategic Plan for MCAN

2017-2020





Executive Summary

A message from Monique Durette, MCAN President/Chair

MCAN was revived in early 2013, and then established as an independent non-profit society in the fall of 2014 thanks to significant contributions from consumer group representatives & Albertans with years of maternity care advocacy experience. MCAN's roots go back to 1986, but the group had been dormant for sometime.

As described in the introductory blog entry from the Maternal Mental Health Mandate Committee, "The first major engagement of MCAN was to conduct a listening campaign to better understand consumers' burning issues in maternity care across the province". The result of that listening campaign was the Maternity Care Priorities in Alberta report, released in November 2014. Since then, MCAN has been involved in various advocacy activities, and works continuously to be a voice for maternity care consumers when addressing media, government, and provincial health organizations such as Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services.

In 2016, the Board of Directors decided that it was time to expand MCAN's stated scope as much of its early work had been focused on increasing access to midwifery services across the province. The Board wanted to establish MCAN as more than just an organization concerned with midwifery matters, and instead as an organization that is a voice of consumers for the entire childbirth continuum. By fall of 2016, MCAN released the four organizational mandates that would encompass all of its public work.

INFANT FEEDING SUPPORT

TO IMPROVE INFANT FEEDING
SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES BY
LOBBYING FOR ALBERTA
HEALTH SERVICES TO ADOPT
THE BABY-FRIENDLY INITIATIVE
AND TO FUND HUMAN
DONOR MILK

MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH

TO ADVOCATE FOR MENTAL
HEALTH SERVICES, SUPPORT,
AND EDUCATION RELATED TO
ALL STAGES OF MATERNITY
CARE IN ALBERTA

UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

TO INCREASE MATERNITY CARE
SERVICES TO UNDERSERVED
POPULATIONS AND RURAL/
REMOTE AREAS

CHILDBIRTH CONTINUUM FUNDING

TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN THEIR
ABILITY TO FREELY CHOOSE
WHERE, HOW, AND WITH WHOM
THEY BIRTH BY SUPPORTING
HEALTH CARE-PROVIDER
FUNDING THAT FOLLOWS THE
CONSUMER, NOT THE CAREGIVER

Standing Committees were established for each mandate, led by one or two of MCAN's Board of Directors Members, and comprised of various other Members of the organization. General descriptions of each mandate were given to the Committees to help establish the parameters for their work.

In early 2017, the Board of Directors once again decided that more needed to be done. In order for MCAN to be seen as a reputable and prominent organization in the eyes of the stakeholders, it was decided that a more formal Strategic Plan was needed. The aim of this strategic plan is to give the organization and its goals and objectives more structure with clear, well-defined, and measurable strategies and tasks for the next 3 years. It will strengthen the collective impact of the organization, and increase our profile and influence on maternity health care matters.

This strategic plan is the beginning of a new era for MCAN. It outlines our direction, and shares that direction with those we serve - the consumers of maternity care in Alberta. This written plan gathers information that already existed in various formats and locations into one concise document. It is a collaborative effort by the current Board of Directors as well as various other contributors, such as past Board Members and other members of the organization. We have already begun moving forward with our exciting plans, which will transform MCAN into a more coordinated and effective organization.

This inception plan is our roadmap for advancing our vision of Alberta women freely choosing where, how, and with whom they birth.

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**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens
can change the world. Indeed it's the only thing that ever has.**

”

~Margaret Mead~

Organizational Background

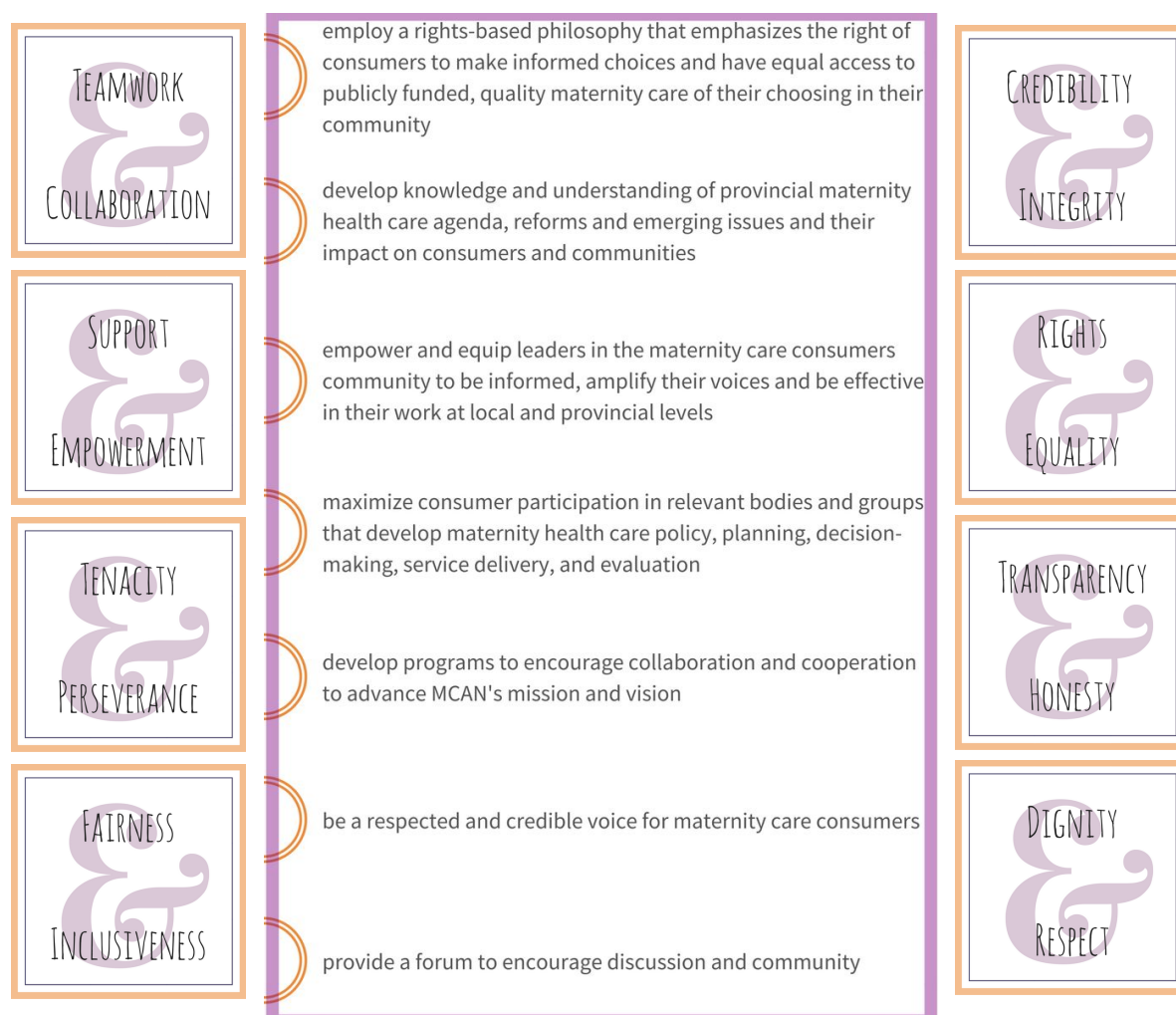
Our Vision

Alberta women freely choose where, how and with whom they birth

Our Mission

The MaternityCare Consumers of Alberta Network (MCAN) is the provincial body that represents Alberta consumers on important maternity care health policy and other initiatives

Our Values



Who We Serve

We are the only maternity care consumer representative organization in Alberta who aims to be the voice for all Albertans. Though there are several local/regional organizations who are long-standing, well

established, doing wonderful work, and with whom we have collaborative relationships, we aspire to continue expanding our reach to more and more Albertans, regardless of their location.

Our Governance Structure

We are an administrative governing board that sets policy and then appoint one of our standing committees to implement the policy.



We are also considered a working board in that our Board Members are also Chairs or members of one or more of the standing committees, helping to do the day-to-day work of our organization.

A Complex Environment

Our SWOT Analysis

Our current environment in Alberta is a complex and challenging one. Birth costs are at an all-time high and we are at the tail-end of a recession. Our government is seeking ways to both save money but also stimulate the economy, ideally shifting money from areas that it can be saved to areas where it can be spent to improve the economic climate. At the same time, more and more women are seeking midwifery care and fully supportive care in all aspects of the childbirth continuum but are being told that, in many cases, it is just not available, that we must make do with what we have. With the assistance of social and mainstream media, we are seeing more women and families sharing their stories. Stories of joy and sadness, exhilaration and loss, blissfulness and pain. Stories of being heard and respected. Stories of trauma and coercion. These are the current realities of birth in Alberta.

MCAN's mission and vision aims to change this environment. In order for us to do our best work, we must also take a hard look at our own strengths and weaknesses, our own opportunities and challenges.



We are comprised of a passionate group of women, wanting to initiate change. We aspire to use this passion to bring the goals, objectives, and strategies of this strategic plan to life. By doing so, we would be setting ourselves up for success to be the voice we strive to be for Albertans. With the vast knowledge and experience of the members of our organization, we put ourselves in a prime position to stay on top of developments in the maternity care world, as it applies on all levels - locally, regionally, and provincially.

Though our members are passionate about the work that we do, at times we find ourselves stretched thin. This can and has resulted in high turnover both on the Board of Directors and other roles within the organization. Ensuring that we share the workload will help alleviate this issue. Another internal struggle we face is, at times, an individual taking on a role they are uncomfortable with, and subsequently

becoming inactive in that role. We intend to combat this by developing clear, distinct and planned roles, as described in one of our goals, as well as a better screening process to ensure that we are putting the right people in the right roles.

Though we have many followers for such a young organization, there remains significant room for growth. We take every opportunity to share the existence of MCAN with all potential stakeholders both virtually and in our local communities. The more we can grow, the more we can do, and the more we will be seen as the voice for Albertans regarding maternity health care issues.

We must continue to meet with our members of government and to get in touch with the individuals within Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services, who will include MCAN in important policy discussions.

This inception strategic plan will help move us forward in this complex environment, putting us at the forefront of Albertans' minds when considering maternity support and advocacy

Our Plan

Goals - Objectives - Strategies - Measurements

1
CONTINUE THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE
ORGANIZATION'S FOUR
OVERARCHING MANDATES

2
DEVELOP AN EXTENSIVE,
EFFECTIVE, AND COMPLETE
ORIENTATION PACKAGE
RELATIVE TO EACH ROLE
WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

3
EXPAND THE ROLE OF REGIONAL
LEADER THROUGHOUT THE
PROVINCE WITH THE AIM OF
HAVING A MINIMUM OF ONE
LEADER IN EACH POLITICAL
RIDING

4
IMPROVE THE FISCAL HEALTH
OF THE ORGANIZATION TO A
LEVEL THAT WILL ENABLE
APPLICATION OF GRANT
FUNDING

Goal 1: Continue the development of the organization's four overarching mandates

Objective	Strategy	Measurements
Assist with development and implementation of Terms of Reference for each Mandate Committee	Provide necessary and available financial resources to any Mandate Committee requiring them	State resources requested and those delivered
	Assist with recruitment of Human Resources/volunteers for each Committee to ensure that objectives and tasks outlined in Terms of Reference can be achieved or completed	State methods used and results
Assist with fostering of important relationships and collaborations with local, regional, and provincial organizations who support the work of the Mandate Committees	Where necessary, make initial contact to leader of other organizations, easing the connection between appropriate individuals in each organization, and demonstrating to all personnel involved that the relationship is endorsed from a top-down perspective	State results
	Provide available financial resources to Mandate Committees to build on the external relationships and collaborations	State resources requested and those delivered

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The world needs dreamers and the world needs doers.

But above all, the world needs dreamers who do.

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~Sarah Ban Breathnach~

Goal 2: Develop an extensive, effective, and complete orientation package relative to each role within the organization

Objective	Strategy	Measurements
Review all role descriptions to ensure current relevance and accuracy of role needs	Conduct one on-one discussions between the President/Chair and each role to review each element of the role description	State results of conversations
	Research and review other equivalent roles in the industry to find similarities and discrepancies, and address as necessary	State results of research and review
	Edit existing role descriptions as necessary	Show finished product
Create all necessary policy, procedure, and planning documents relative to each role	Using the edited role description as a guide, develop policy documents necessary for governance of responsibilities of each role (e.g. Media Advocacy Policy for VP & WSMC)	Show finished product
	Dependent on the role, create all necessary and relevant procedural manuals (e.g. Bookkeeping, changing of addresses, completion of changes to society documents with Alberta Corporate Registries)	Show finished product
	Develop Terms of Reference or Plan document for each role to ensure role continuance and continuity when a new individual takes over a position	Show finished product
Create a set of "general" documents to be included with each Orientation Package, relative to the entire organization and also relative to general volunteering with a non-profit organization	Research which general documents are best to describe the work of our organization and include them in the package	State results & include finished product

Objective	Strategy	Measurements
Make available any possible training and/or support necessary for the software, electronics, or skills required for a role	Provide links and resources to which individuals can access to obtain training or education deemed important for their role	Show results
	Provide one-on-one assistance between experienced users and new volunteers	State results
	Implement an on-going certification program such as Imagine Canada's Standards Program	State results



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Great leaders don't set out to be a leader... they set out to make a difference. It's never about the role - always about the goal

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~Lisa Haisha~

Goal 3: Expand the role of Regional Leader throughout the province with the aim of having a minimum of one Leader in each political riding

Objective	Strategy	Measurements
Establish reasonable geographical regions where one or two individuals could effectively represent consumers for their area	Research distances between cities, towns, hamlets, etc to determine reasonableness of a defined region and adjust as necessary	Show results
	Research populations within a proposed region to determine how many Regional Leaders would best represent those consumers	Show results
	Research community services within each proposed region to determine differences and similarities within cities/towns and whether different sub-regions would benefit from additional or separate Leaders due to potential significant differences or challenges	Show results
Connect with local birth supporters and advocates within each Region to find individuals to fill the roles of Regional Leaders	Communicate with doulas, midwives, nurses, and other birth professionals, as well as mothers and fathers in every community, sharing the work of MCAN	State results
	Post information about MCAN in local physical locations such as libraries, community centres, bulletin boards (where permitted), as well as virtually such as local social media groups	List postings and results

Goal 4: Improve the fiscal health of the organization to a level that will enable application of grant funding

Objective	Strategy	Measurements
Grow the membership base of the organization	Advertise on various social media platforms, both with shared and paid posts	Create Terms of Reference document for Web and Social Media Committee to track growth
	Obtain Google Ad Grants, and use to increase reach of website	Use Google Analytics to analyze exposure
	Collaborate with other local and regional birth advocacy organizations to create a joint membership option	State results
	Collaborate with local and relevant businesses who would like to assist in membership sign-ups in their stores	State results
Increase the number of fundraising initiatives	Collaborate with artists of various genres to create fundraising projects (e.g. silent auctions)	State results
	Collaborate with local, regional, and provincial businesses that members of MCAN would/do frequent to create fundraising events	State results
	Join local, provincial, and national organizations such as 100 Women Who Care and Imagine Canada, with the two-fold intention of helping other worthwhile causes as well as spreading awareness of and increasing exposure to MCAN	List memberships and state results
Establish all necessary tracking documents or programs to record important volunteer information such as time contributions and tasks	Research all available/existing tracking software that is within our near-future financial means	State results

Objective	Strategy	Measurements
	Create a tracking template to be used by any volunteer for the purpose of compiling information about human resource volunteered time-costs that can contribute to a grant application	State results
	Evaluate time spent on manual tracking vs the cost and ease-of-use of tracking software to determine future validity of purchasing reasonable and useful software	State results

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There's a moment when you have to choose whether to be silent or to stand up

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~Malala~

What The Future Brings

How We Will Progress

There is a lot to be done. The goals outlined in this plan are just a starting point for our organization.

Each stated strategy of the objectives of our goals has a listed measure of progress. Some are qualitative and others are quantitative. Expressed accomplishments and progress measures represent specific actions that result in progress towards our goals and will be built into our subsequent plans.

We will review the stated accomplishments and evaluate the progress measures at a minimum of annually. We will then use the outcome of the reviews to reassess the Strategic Plan every 3 years.

In addition, we will look to our members and the general public for feedback about our work, providing us with invaluable information about what is working and what we can improve upon.

We are excited about this plan and look forward to what the future brings.

