

ADVICE TO MINISTER

<p>CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES NOTE</p> <p>Ministry: Health Date: Sept. 7, 2016 Minister Responsible: Terry Lake</p>	<p>Non-resident of Canada births</p>
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BACKGROUND REGARDING THE ISSUE:

- For the past month, there has been several media reports on non-resident of Canada births in B.C., and discussion about possible problems caused by these types of births.
- The potential issues being discussed in media include:

1) Revenue generation:

- Media are questioning whether the rates charged to non-residents of Canada to give birth in B.C. should be increased to generate revenue for the health care system, or discourage the practice.
- Charges to non-residents of Canada for any medical services in a B.C. hospital are based on rates set annually by the provincial government, with input from the health authorities.
- Non-residents of Canada who present at a Vancouver Coastal, Fraser Health or PHSA hospital are required to make a pre-payment deposit, with deposit rates varying based on individual health authority policy. VCH charges a deposit rate of \$7,500 for a regular birth, or \$13,000 for a C-section, while FHA and PHSA charge a standard deposit rate of \$6,000 and \$15,000 respectively. The Interior Health Authority, Island Health and Northern Health do not require any deposit.
- The total amount charged to non-residents of Canada will vary depending on the complexity of patient care provided and individual procedures performed (e.g. lab tests, x-rays, MRIs).

2) Concerns over “bumping” pregnant British Columbians due to non-resident births:

- Media have reported 15% of births at Richmond Memorial Hospital are to non-residents. This number is accurate, according VCH, and also higher than other hospitals in the health authority.
- While Vancouver Coastal confirms 14 expectant mothers have had to be transferred to other hospitals in an 18 month period, it's not clear if those moves were made due to instances of birth tourism or other circumstances such as pregnancy complications.
- While maternity “diversions” are rare, VCH is looking at ways to reduce such situations altogether by requiring parents-to-be to register for services at Richmond Hospital six to eight weeks in advance. This will enable better planning and, hopefully, give VCH an opportunity to identify when bottlenecks may exist.
- In order to ensure patients are safe and well cared for, transfers between hospitals are primarily tracked based on the medical needs of patients, not

overcrowding. For example, a transfer would be logged based on whether someone requires a higher level of care or specialized diagnostic testing.

3) Anchor babies:

- Media have also reported on the possibility of non-resident births occurring to secure “anchor babies”. Media have speculated about the future burden on government social systems when these children return to B.C. and support their families (parents) in immigrating.
- A petition has been sponsored by local MP Alice Wong to eliminate birthright citizenship unless one of the parents of the child born to is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada.
- The federal government explored eliminating birthright citizenship several years ago, however later abandoned the idea.

Non Resident Births Overview

- There are two categories of non-residents of Canada who are giving birth in B.C.:
 - 1) Expectant mothers on temporary permits such as work/study permits or tourist visas who pay their birthing costs up front and have their babies with no MSP coverage. This group is typically associated with baby houses, and the focus of the media. The ministry is aware of 26 so-called “baby houses” in the Lower Mainland. These baby houses provide hospitality services to pregnant women, new mothers and their babies. They do not provide medical care.
 - 2) People who properly obtain MSP but then become ineligible for continued coverage, often by returning to their home country without notifying MSP, later returning to Canada to have their child, only to then return to their country of origin after the birth.

ADVICE AND RECOMMENDED RESPONSE:

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