

Dr. André Lalonde Honoured as Champion for Women's Health

Ottawa, 2 December 2009 – During the opening ceremonies of the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) XIX World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics in South Africa, Dr. André Lalonde, Executive Vice-President of the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), received the FIGO Distinguished Service Award, a prestigious honor for his lifetime of work promoting women's health in Canada and abroad.

This award is reserved for obstetricians and gynaecologists who have demonstrated great passion and commitment toward the prevention of tragedies in women's health. Dr. André Lalonde's achievements are an example of how, with enough passion and dedication, an individual has the power to make a difference in a large-scale system.

"Throughout my career, I've committed myself to protecting the lives of women and children in disadvantaged circumstances," says Dr. Lalonde about his 35 years in medicine. "It's a great honour, but I'm not done yet. We must continually work to move obstetrics and gynaecology forward, improving the care provided to women and their babies all over the world."

Since 1984, Dr. Lalonde has been involved in numerous international projects in developing countries, addressing sexual reproductive rights and the right to safe maternity care. Beginning with his volunteer work 25 years ago as an obstetrician-gynaecologist in Papua New Guinea, Dr. Lalonde has developed the SOGC's International Women's Health Program (IWHP), which has now expanded to conduct activities in more than 20 countries.

One of his most important projects has been the ALARM International Program, which has led to major advances in many countries by addressing emerging obstetrical care for women and their newborns.

Throughout his career with the SOGC, Dr. Lalonde has also developed the Partnership Program which operates in Burkina Faso, Haiti, Guatemala, and Uganda. More recently, he has led FIGO's Saving Mothers and Newborns project in ten low resource countries: Ukraine, Moldova, Kosovo, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Haiti, Uruguay, and Peru.

"Dr. Lalonde has been exemplary as a lifelong role model in advocating for and implementing meaningful change that will save the lives of women and children around the globe and at home," said Dr. Dorothy Shaw, past president of FIGO. "It was a proud moment, as President of FIGO and a fellow Canadian, to be able to present Dr. Lalonde with this award, for which he was nominated by his peers internationally to recognize his contributions."

Dr. Lalonde is currently the FIGO representative for the Partnership for Mother, Newborn, and Child Health (PMNCH), a WHO-based group that works to bring better health care to women, newborns, and children throughout the world. This week, he and the SOGC are pleased to be hosting the group in Ottawa as they issue a call for engagement to Canadian parliamentarians to do their part to ensure that maternal, newborn and child health is on the G8/G20 agenda in 2010 and to sustain Canadian contributions to international efforts focused on women and mothers, their babies and children.

About the SOGC:

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration, outreach and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information, visit www.sogc.org.

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