**International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Nov 25, 2018)**

**According to the 2017 Demographic Health Surveys (DHS), approximately 23.5% of women in Haiti reported sexual and physical violence committed by a partner. Many experts feel that the statistics about gender-based violence in Haiti are even greater than the numbers reported by DHS. Haiti, as well as many other developing countries, has socio-economic structural inequalities and barriers that implicitly enable gender-based violence (GBV). The unsafe living conditions in the temporary displacement camps set up after the horrific 2010 earthquake are major contributing factors for the increase in violence against girls and women. After the earthquake many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) “set up house” in Haiti to provide services to victims. Despite some progress due to the assistance and resources that were organized to fight violence against women following the earthquake, conditions have deteriorated for women during the months prior to June 2015. At that time many post-earthquake NGO’s left Haiti, resulting in the decrease of services and resources over time.**

**Midwives, as trusted health professionals, play a critical role in supporting and caring for victims of GBV. The Association of Haitian Midwives (AISFH/Association Infirmière Sage Femme d’Haiti) recognize GBV to be a significant problem that their patients face. Given that GBV is a complex issue with multiple layers of consequences (psychological, physical, economical, social/societal, legal and cultural), The Association of Haitian Midwives (AISFH) requested to have additional training in this area in order to improve their skills in providing trauma-informed care for victims. Midwives are often the only care provider that a woman will seek care from in her lifetime. Empowering Haitian midwives with the knowledge, skills and sensitivity required to work with GBV victims creates a sustainable model of care. Haitian Midwives are part of the community in which they live and work. They are in the optimal position to provide culturally sensitive evidence-based care to Haitian victims and survivors.**

**November 25th is the International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women. From November 6th-9th, FAHM (Foundation for the Advancement of Haitian Midwives) hosted a four-day conference for Haitian midwives on GBV in Port- au- Prince Haiti. Twenty-two (22) midwives from 7 out of 10 of Haiti’s departments were in attendance.  Many ideas and discussions ensued which required self- reflection and examination of personal ideas/biases related to violence, sex and barriers to seeking care. Topics included: cultural/societal norms affecting health, sexual and reproductive health, respectful and privacy protected care, principles of trauma informed care, types of gender-based violence, human/women’s rights according to Haitian law, medical exam of the victim, medical-legal aspects/reporting and ethics/professional development.**

**We were honored to have SHOG (Societe Haitienne d’Obstetrique et de Gynecologie) and Monique Manigat (Haitian psychotherapist based in Haiti/ Billion Women Rising Ayiti) as presenters.  We thank our partners: AISFH (Association Infirmière Sage Femme d’Haiti/ Haitian Association of Midwives), Every Mother Counts, Rona Jaffe Foundation, Global Health Action, NYC Midwives and Black Feminist Future.**