



Original Message

From: Robins, Julie

Sent: Thursday, 15 February 2007 3:11 PM

To: Committee, HAA (PEPP)

Subject: Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Aging Inquiry into Breast Feeding in Australia

I would like to submit the following personal experience to the above Inquiry

Name: Dr Julie Robins

I have had two children, giving birth to the first when I was aged 35 years. I had little trouble breastfeeding either of my children, but I am a well-educated professional who undertook a lot of reading prior to giving birth as well as attending a couple of meetings of the Australian Breast Feeding Association before giving birth. I was a member of the ABA for 1 year and whole-heartedly support their work.

With the birth of my first child, I stayed in hospital for 2 nights/3days and was able to frequently ask for the nurses to check if I was attaching my baby correctly. After going home, I received little support from the hospital (public) except for one phone call from the delivering midwife. With the birth of my second child, I stayed in hospital for 1 night/2 days before being sent home. Again I only received one phone call from the delivering mid-wife.

I believe that there needs to be more in-home support for new mothers, particularly first-time mothers, in terms of assistance with breast-feeding. I was passionate about breast-feeding my babies and being well-informed, was able to persevere through the early stages of breastfeeding (which did hurt somewhat until my nipples settled down - which occurred for both babies). I would like to see more opportunity for midwives or lactation consultants to visit new mothers in their homes to talk about breastfeeding or the new baby in general and support the new mothers, who have an onerous need to talk about their baby and issues like breastfeeding.

I have breastfed my babies until they were 15 and 18mths old and have found that this was much longer than most of the people I knew and much longer than any of my relatives expected that a baby should be breastfed for. I would like to see the general public educated as to the benefits of extended breastfeeding and that there should not be a societal expectation that babies only benefit from breastfeeding up until 6 months of age. I know of several doctors and GP's who dismiss the benefits of breastfeeding beyond 6 months of age.

In addition, I had more breastmilk than I could use. I would have gladly donated some of my breastmilk to a breastmilk bank, had such repositories been open. I fully support the spending on government money on breastmilk banks such that babies in need of human breastmilk can have the opportunity to have breastmilk rather than just be formulae feed.

Having said the above, I would like to say that it is every mothers right to chose to breastfeed or bottle feed their baby and that neither should be made to feel guilty or inadequate for that choice.

Please contact me on the above address should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Julie Robins