

Dear Senator Moore

Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills

I write to express my concern about the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

In particular, I am very concerned that women who can access homebirth via the hospital model of care, will be subjected to strict criteria and guidelines as set out in hospital policy.

I myself, chose to homebirth my third baby in June 2008. This pregnancy was after a caesarean delivery of my second child.

I was classified "high risk" by the hospital system due to the previous caesarean delivery, and thus subjected to humiliating and unnecessary procedures, that were not evidence based, nor in line with my choices or requests.

I had repeated horrible experiences within the hospital system.

After conducting my own research, and discovering that the level of "risk" that the doctors were describing was actually .07%, I decided that I would be safer birthing at home. I engaged the services of an independent midwife, and had a safe homebirth, where my wishes were respected.

I was in the absolute care of my midwife the entire time that I laboured. She monitored me constantly, notified the ambulance service of our address and what event was taking place, and we had resuscitation equipment and medical supplies on hand.

I felt perfectly safe and calm, and knew beyond doubt that my midwife was there for me and me only, and was not going to be called away to assist anyone else during this time.

I also knew that should an adverse situation present itself, that my midwife was highly qualified, and trained, and that she was able to make quick and precise decisions regarding the health and safety of both myself and my baby.

I fear gravely, that it will be women such as myself - so called "high risk" women, who will have the least amount of choice under the proposed legislation, a women in my position, would be forced to birth at the hospital -

There would be NO alternative.

If you take a moment, you will find that women who do choose to homebirth, are very intelligent, articulate, well informed women, who believe very strongly in the ability and sanctity of their own bodies. By taking away our right to choose where and with whom we birth, this legislation will directly be in violation of a women's basic human rights.

I demand, as a consumer, and as an Australian citizen, the right to choose to birth my babies at home, with an independent midwife, and with full protection and assistance as would be provided for my sister who chooses a "social" and pre planned caesarean with an obstetrician in hospital.

Yours sincerely  
Diana Taylor