

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.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

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

I believe it is important for all women to have a choice to birth their children in an environment where they feel is comfortable and safe for them. If homebirths are excluded from this bill it frightens me, the impact it will have on the women who will refuse to have their babies in a hospital.

I know that my own hospital experience wasn't a nice one. My personal needs were not at all considered and the midwife on call forced the gas onto my face, after i had declined several times, and within seconds i was vomitting from a reaction to the gas. This then caused me to vomit with every contraction after that, making my labour a much harder experience. My birth was progressing without any problems and all i wanted was to be left alone with my husband to birth my baby. The nurse and the doctor had a great need to hurry me along and they seemed very uncomfortable with my ease about birthing my baby. This caused me great distress and had me doubting my natural capabilities.

I then progressed to the bathroom and found comfort in the bath and under the hot shower, however, as it came closer to delivering my baby i was asked to move out of the bathroom and onto the bed as i was not ALLOWED to be in the bathroom because the doctor wanted me on the bed! How completely WRONG is this type of treatment! Here i was, someone who wasn't causing any trouble and was happy to birth quietly and with ease but NO it wasn't allowed in the hospital environment because it didn't suit the doctor.

This prompted me to have a homebirth with my second child as i knew that a water birth was not allowed in our local hospitals. My homebirth was absolutely perfect, a beautiful five (5) hour labour and water birth, and i did it with ease with the support of a fantastic, experienced midwife

who cared for me throughout the entire pregnancy. Now what is so wrong with that??

A birthing mother is a sacred thing. Her environment affects the outcome of her birth which in turn affects the type of relationship she develops with with her new born baby. My point is, every woman should have the choice of where she wishes to give birth to HER baby and she deserves the same healthcare options as the woman who wishes to birth her baby in a hospital. Lets not make this about the politics and the doctors and how much money they will be losing, lets make this about the women and their babies!

I thank you for your time in reading this letter and hope that you have the best interest, of your fellow women, at heart.

Yours sincerely

Julie Folino Gallo