

20th July, 2009  
Sharon Dodd

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

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 but excluding those supporting women who have made the choice to birth at home.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this could only 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.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement.

This is putting women in a risk situation.

Those who believe in being able to have the freedom to choose where they want to birth, (other than being forced to birth within the hospital system), will still want to birth at home. This means women forced to birth alone at home without medical guidance from midwives and risking themselves and their babies.

I have recently had the beautiful experience of birthing at home, employing the best midwives I could find in homebirth, with over 40 years combined experience. This insured that I had the most exceptional personalised care in what is surely the most familiar and loving environment.

Our decision to go with a home birth was not entered into lightly we attended many courses, lectures and meetings on birth and spoke to numerous mothers. These mothers had been so disappointed and saddened by their own birth experiences and under the illusion they would have control over their birth choices once in hospital, yet finding how any control was taken away from them with early intervention into what was otherwise a healthy labour. This intervention appeared more suited to the timing and convenience of the hospital instead of the mother and baby.

Surely both parties do actually need each other, and perhaps if the focus during conversation moved more to the disappointments, requests, wants, etc of the birthing Mothers, this would lead to some truly outstanding and personalised birth experiences.

The number of Mothers wanting Home birth is only growing so to try and suppress this option for couples is only turning your back on women's choices and certainly a step back into the dark ages.

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

Yours sincerely  
Sharon Dodd