

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 may have emailed you before on this issue, but it is a very important issue that is pertinent to my circumstances. I am a religious Jewish woman who believes in having lots of precious babies. I also have a history of unnecessary traumatic c/sections and subsequent normal homebirths with an Independent Midwife. My biggest babies were born safely at home despite a smaller baby being taken via c/section previously, as the obstetrician in a public hospital deemed him to big for my pelvis. He was obviously very dangerously wrong, subjecting me to all the dreadful risks of major abdominal surgery!! Being given c/sections that I did not need or want has put a huge dampner on my desire/belief to have many children. The only way I can continue safely is to have an Independent midwife attend me. I will not choose hospital birth (unless in a dire emergency) even if Midwives are unable to practice after July 2010, and even if something happens and they can practice, if my husband is still unemployed, thanks to the financial crisis (has been unemployed since December 2008), I will not be able to afford a homebirth midwife (if she isnt medicare funded), so would probably just end up choosing to birth unassisted at home. I am far too traumatised to plan a hospital birth. Homebirth is the only way I can birth.

I don't understand why, in NZ, the UK and places like the Netherlands, homebirth is so easy to access and is extremely safe - and extremely cost effective - yet Australia would rather spend hard earned tax payers money on lining the pockets of obstetric surgeons who give unnecessary and dangerous abdominal surgery to women who do not want or need it. It defies logic. Please allow Midwives access to medicare funding, it will save so much money in the long run for this country, and far less women will be traumatised by the current cattle market that is the hospital system.

I also can't understand why Australia would discriminate against a minority like this either?

Best Regards

Rebecca Lawther