

Marsden Wagner M.D., M.S.

July 8, 2009

Ms Claire Moore
Chair
Senate Community Affairs Legislative Committee
Community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Moore,

For 15 years I have been a Director of Women's and Children's Health for the World Health Organization. I understand that you are now in the process of making legislative changes to improve maternity care. It is imperative that this process allows the women of Australia to have absolute choice about their place of giving birth, including out-of-hospital birth centers and planned home birth.

For years, obstetricians have fought to maintain a monopoly over childbirth by falsely claiming hospital birth is safer. There is now overwhelming scientific evidence that planned out-of-hospital birth is a perfectly safe choice for at least 90% of pregnant women who have not had serious medical complications. So it is not a question of safety but a question of freedom of women and families to control the circumstances of one of the most important events in their lives—the birth of their child.

There is also considerable scientific evidence that for the 90% of pregnant women without medical complications, midwives are the safest persons to attend birth, whether in the hospital, birth center or at home. Your legislation must include all necessary provisions to guarantee the presence of midwives at all planned home births.

For all the above reasons, the World Health Organization strongly endorses maternity care systems which give women absolute choice of place of birth, including home birth and a midwife to attend her birth.

Sincerely yours,

Marsden Wagner M.D., M.S.

BRIEF CURRICULUM VITAE
MARSDEN WAGNER, M.D., M.S.

BIRTH San Francisco, California, USA

EDUCATION

B.S. University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA)

M.D. UCLA School of Medicine

Internship , UCLA Hospital

Resident physician, UCLA Hospital

Chief resident physician, UCLA Hospital

Post-doctoral Fellow of National Institutes of Health in perinatology (Obstetrics and Neonatology) and perinatal epidemiology at the UCLA Schools of Medicine and Public Health

M.S. Post-graduate degree in perinatology (Obstetrics and Neonatology), perinatal epidemiology and reproductive science, UCLA

EXPERIENCE

6 years Assistant Professor of Perinatology (Obstetrics and Neonatology) and Public Health, UCLA School of Medicine and UCLA School of Public Health

3 years Co-Director, Maternal & Child Health, California State Dept. of Public Health

6 years Director, UCLA-University of Copenhagen Health Service Research Center

15 years Director, Women's and Children's Health, World Health Organization
(responsible for Women's and Children's Health in 45 industrialized countries)

Present Private Consultant

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Testimony given before the US Congress, British parliament, French National Assembly, Italian Parliament, Danish parliament, Israeli Parliament.

Consultations with national and local governments and non-governmental organizations and scientific papers and lectures given in 45 countries. As an example, since the year 2000, consultations and presentations in: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bosnia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands, North Ireland, Norway, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, USA (Austin, Bridgeport, Boise, Boston, Chicago, Eugene, Great Falls, Honolulu, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Montgomery, Newport News, New York City, Oakland, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland (Maine), San Antonio, Seattle, Sioux Falls, Slovenia, Washington DC)

Television interviews in the U.S. on Dateline NBC, CBS Boston & New York & San Francisco, Good Morning America, Phil Donahue, and others, and in Great Britain, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Albania.

SELECTED HONORS AND AWARDS

Including, as examples: Professional Achievement Award, UCLA School of Medicine; Alumnus of the Year, UCLA School of Medicine 1995; Living Treasure Award, Mothering Magazine USA

PUBLICATIONS

151 scientific papers, 23 book chapters, 15 scientific books published in English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian, Japanese, Croatian, Chinese, Swedish, Hebrew and Danish.