

Comments on new legislation regarding midwifery:

"101 Conditions of registration

(1) If a National Board decides to register a person in the health profession for which the Board is established, the registration is subject to the following conditions:

(a) for a registered health practitioner other than a health practitioner who holds non-practising registration:

(i) that the registered health practitioner must complete the continuing professional development program required by the National Board, and

(ii) that the registered health practitioner must not practise the health profession unless professional indemnity insurance arrangements are in force in relation to the practitioner's practice of the profession,

Given that professional indemnity insurance is not currently available to midwives practising outside a hospital, this makes independent midwives attending homebirths illegal. This will force women to birth at hospital OR, of more concern, force women who wish to birth at home to do so without a midwife in attendance. In my opinion such a practice is dangerous and should not be encouraged. This legislation will not only encourage free-birthing but force people into it.

Quote:

Subdivision 6 General

148 Directing or inciting unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct

(1) A person must not direct or incite a registered health practitioner to do anything, in the course of the practitioner's practice of the health profession, that amounts to unprofessional conduct or professional misconduct.

Maximum penalty:

(a) in the case of an individual—\$30,000, or

(b) in the case of a body corporate—\$60,000. "

This means that if I ask a midwife to attend my homebirth it will cost me \$30,000 and the midwife will go to gaol for her assistance – what happened to freedom of choice? If I need a plumber the government doesn't tell me that I can only use a plumber who is a member of a large corporation who employs 3000 or more people, nor do they threaten to fine me \$30,000 for calling a small independent contractor (and send the plumber to gaol). How is it that a woman's choice of health provider should be any different?

I ask that you change the legislation now, before it becomes law, to allow independent midwives to practice without insurance. I have lost a daughter to stillbirth, and know many other women who have had a similar experience...and no amount of money from insurance would have made a difference to my heartache. In fact, I would have preferred to have had my daughter at home than at hospital (the outcome would not have been any better/worse based on location).

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