

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.

As I am currently nursing student, and aspire to be a midwife, I feel that it should be the client's right to choose whether they give birth in an environment that is best suited to emotional and physical needs. Should that environment be in the privacy of their own homes, surrounded by members of family and the comforting memories that perhaps only a home may offer them, then it is their individual choice to do so.

As a student, the concept of a holistic approach to client care is taught. This being the application of the Biological/physical, psychological and environmental aspects. By denying the client choice, all of these elements of the holistic approach are not applied, this represents a neglect towards the duty of care towards our patients.

I am not saying that I would choose a community placement for myself once qualified, but an opportunity to have that choice available without legal implications should be made available, not only for midwives but for families as well.

Yours sincerely

Renae Burwood