

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 believe Homebirth is a totally just cause - it is something that needs to be promoted and not outlawed due to no insurance for homebirth midwives.

Homebirth is a wonderful and safe way of birthing a child when there is midwife assistance. I believe that birth is overmedicated and over hospitalized in our society.

Personally I home birthed on my own - with no medical assistance, although it was very special there were other circumstances eg baby went into stress then passed meconium and also had the cord wrapped around her neck twice and I sustained a 3rd degree tear. I believe that if I had a midwife present at home she would have been able to help me manage the situation better with possibly no tear.

I believe that women will be forced into this same situation - that will not be safe. Women believing that they want a homebirth and have no other option than to freebirth on their own. Please rethink this decision - as it will defiantly lead to more people birthing at home on their own and who knows those implications of that.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Anthony