

16th July 2009

To whom it may concern,

My name is Andrea Albertini and I am a concerned Midwife and mother writing in regards to the Inquiry into the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills.

It is my understanding that Midwives working in Private Practice attending Homebirth and their clients will not be included in the benefits regarding Medicare, Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and Indemnity Insurance. I'm extremely upset and concerned over this as it will affect me in two very important ways.

Firstly I am a Privately Practicing Midwife. I trained and worked in Hospitals for approximately 3 years prior to commencing my work in Homebirth. I have been working providing a Homebirth Service for women in my local area for three years now. The women seeking these services are educated healthy women who have a right to have their services covered under Medicare as currently they have to pay for these services with no ability to claim them back from Medicare. Homebirth saves the Health care budget money through reduced intervention, reduced hospital stay and less use of unnecessary invasive technology. These women should be rewarded for reducing costs to the Government, not punished by being excluded in improvements to the Maternity Services.

Secondly I am concerned regarding the exclusion of Homebirthing mothers from having a Midwife with Prescribing rights. Although many women birthing at home do not want medications for childbirth, getting prescriptions for essential emergency childbirth drugs and routine newborn medications is extremely difficult for many parents due to lack of participation and support from local General Practitioners. Recently I had a client want a routine screening test and I referred her to her GP as I am unable to order routine tests. Her GP went away on holiday and would not allow her test results to be released to her or myself. This with-holding of information could have been particularly dangerous to her newborn and it is within the woman's right and my right as her lead chosen carer, to have access to vital information regarding the woman's health in Pregnancy. Women birthing in Hospitals readily have access to screening tests whether they are ordered by a doctor or a midwife. The largest benefit for introducing Prescribing rights for Midwives was going to be seen by the homebirthing community, and once again we have been discriminated against and excluded from having access to basic health screening. information regarding their screening tests and also have a Midwife with Insurance.

Currently there is no Insurance provider who will insure Midwives, this is becoming more of a dilemma as National Registration in 2010 is planned and Midwives will not be able to register without Insurance. This effectively leaves me out of a job. I will not work for a Hospital as I specifically became a Midwife to work in my full scope of Practice according to the definition of Midwifery. I always intended to work attending Homebirths and will do so for as long as I can. Who will support these women to birth at home when Midwives will no longer be able to Register due to lack of insurance for Midwives working Privately attending Homebirths? In this area I know of at least three midwives who have between 20-40 clients a year birthing at home. This amounts to hundreds of women choosing to birth at home in the North Coast NSW area. There is no publicly funded homebirth program in this area and these women choose to have a Midwife present at their birth because they recognize the evidence regarding the safety in Homebirthing with a qualified Midwife. These women will be forced to make a choice between

birthing at home alone or birthing in a hospital. It is unethical to deny a woman choice over her own bodily functions, particularly something so life altering as the birthing rite of passage.

I urge those in a position of power to support the choice of birthing at home for women who want this. Lets keep homebirth a safe and valid option for all women. Do not exclude women who choose this option and force them the practice of homebirthing underground.

I am currently expecting my second child, and just as my first child was brought into this world in our safe and loving home, this baby will also come into our lives in this way. My family makes major sacrifices to pay the fees our midwife and I have agreed on for her services. My family pays taxes and effectively funds Medicare safety net and private health indemnity for Doctors and other health expenditures. Yet I find it incredibly unfair that I can not claim anything back for choosing to birth at home. Why do I not have the same rights as other tax paying citizens? Why should my Midwives services not be included just because I birth at home? I am so saddened that my future children will have to be born in my home without the support of a midwife should those in a position of power choose to continue to ignore our pleads.

From Andrea Albertini