

When I told my GP that I was planning a homebirth, she was so frightened that something would "go wrong" and I would subsequently sue her, that she dumped me as a patient. Nothing I could say would reassure her; because homebirth midwives don't have insurance, she saw herself as the logical next target. She refused to see me even to write prescriptions for my critically essential asthma medication, or for referrals for blood tests during pregnancy, and when I phoned AMA Qld to complain, they backed her choice to refuse care, unless I couldn't find another GP within a 2hr travel radius. It took me many weeks to find a GP willing to respect my right to choose my baby's birthplace, and due to difficulties lining up a midwife, I was thus unfortunately without any medical care whatsoever for my first trimester of pregnancy with my first baby.

I have had two safe and wonderful midwife-attended homebirths now, and can't imagine going into hospital for any future possible births. While there were no problems, I was especially glad to have a midwife present to monitor the heartrate of my first child with a doppler, when we saw (old) meconium in the waters, and to judge their breathing after birth, so I would know if there were complications indicating a need to transfer. If homebirth with a midwife becomes effectively illegal, I would still want to birth at home. Don't imagine for a second that all homebirthers will simply shrug their shoulders and head off to hospital instead. But if midwives can't legally attend a homebirth, then no GP in their right mind will write scripts for syntocinon or local anaesthetic, since no-one will be able to legally administer them. Women who choose to birth at home will do so alone, without the potentially life-saving support of a midwife with the skills and medications they can bring to a birth. Unless they can find a midwife willing to attend illegally - whom even if she attends, will likely do so without medications or oxygen cylinders in case of emergencies, and will be understandably reluctant to transfer with her client to hospital if labour progress is problematic, or provide any notes to hospital staff on her client's medical history and antenatal care.

Please help ensure that independent midwives are included in the government's package of liability insurance for midwives. Alternatively, include a clause in the proposed legislation, allowing independent midwives to continue to legally practise without insurance until such time as it can be secured. The lives of women and children may very literally depend upon your support for such changes.