

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

28th July, 2009

Email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

To the secretary,

Re: Inquiry into National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Doctors and Other Health Workers

I write to express my concern about the proposed changes that will exclude independent midwives attending home births to access insurance and therefore unable to register or practice as a midwife in the home (unless attached to a funded hospital program which is not offered in Victoria where I live).

I am a mother of three who chose home birth for the birth of my third baby last year after two hospital births. I am keen to have more children and am fearful that I will end up back in the hospital system where I received unnecessary interventions and a lack of quality care, or to choose to finish having children prematurely which is not desirable for my husband and myself. My home birth was paid fully out of my own pocket (\$3,200) reducing costs for the government by not using the already overloaded maternity system.

I chose to home birth after fully researching my options and reading many studies done on home birth which show it is as safe as hospital birthing with lower intervention rates. My home birth was attended by two independent midwives both with many years of experience in both a hospital setting and home birthing. My pre-natal care was my main midwife coming to my home and staying over an hour each visit followed by post-natal care of 6 weeks. For my husband who was reluctant to agree to us home birthing in the beginning, the pre-natal care was what 'won' him over to home birthing. He noted how relaxed I was in my third pregnancy compared to my first two where I saw an obstetrician for the normal 15 minute visits in his office where we would wait an hour each time to see him as he was late with overbooked appointments. The choice to home birth was the right one for us and it is a choice we would make again in a heartbeat. I understand it is not the choice for everyone but right now it is a choice anyone can make and it would be a devastating if this choice was taken away.

If home birth is not available with an independent midwife due to the proposed legislation, I am also fearful that some women will resort to birthing at home without a midwife therefore risking the lives of themselves and their babies. This is not something I am prepared to do so am left with the dilemma of either birthing in hospital or choosing to finish our family before we planned to.

I ask that you include independent midwives in the current proposed changes to be also funded by the government with insurance so they can continue to provide the high level of care they do to many satisfied women like myself.

Kind Regards,

Michelle McRitchie