

Exposure Draft

Michelle How  
To NRAIP 17/7/09 12:00AM

Re: Exposure draft of Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009 Bill B

I am sending this submission because I am concerned about my right to be able to choose how I will birth my future babies, and for the rights of all women to be able to choose what happens to their bodies.

The sections 101 and 148 will mean it will be illegal for me to choose again the same care I had for my most recent birth. I interviewed, hired, and paid in full, a midwife in private practice. She met with me at my house for all of my antenatal appointments (which were all at least an hour long), she supported me through my 24 hour labour, she helped me birth my baby safely, she called for a back up midwife when one was required, she helped my son take his first breath, she stayed with us while we were settled happily but tired into bed, she visited me not just at home, but in my bedroom for the first few visits, for the next six weeks and she guided us in establishing a successful breastfeeding relationship. I expected to have continuity of care not just through that pregnancy but through all my future pregnancies too. There is no other service like this available to women.

I respect every woman's right to choose what she believes is best for her body and her baby, and her family. I hope that every woman researches the decisions she makes around her care as much as I did. I trust that doctors and hospitals strive to obtain truly informed consent from each of their clients (aka patients).

Please, please trust me to take responsibility for myself and my baby. Do not force me to birth at home alone, or without a registered midwife, or in a hospital that will not give the level of care and respect I deserve. If I need life saving treatment, or my baby does, I know I will be given the best our health care system can provide, and I am grateful. But let me choose to not use treatment I don't need. Let me choose to help the hospital keep its resources for someone who needs them.

Midwifery is not about 'fixing' a problem, like the other professions listed in this bill, it is about being 'with woman' as she uses her body for what it was intended. Midwives in private practice should not be included in this legislation.

Michelle How