

Comments on Exposure draft of Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009

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To NRAIP 17/7/09 10:17AM

I am writing to express my concerns over the Exposure draft of Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009 (Bill B) 101 Conditions of registration, particularly point 101.1 (a) (ii).

(ii) that the registered health practitioner must not practise the health profession unless professional indemnity insurance arrangements are in force in relation to the practitioner's practice of the profession.

Currently there is no professional indemnity insurance available to midwives who practice outside of a hospital setting. It is my understanding that if the above is passed, that as of July 2010 it will therefore be illegal for a woman to give birth in her home with the professional care of a midwife. This would be a completely unsatisfactory situation. It is vital that women are able to chose to birth in the safety and comfort of their own home with the care of a midwife.

I am confused as to why professional indemnity insurance is a requirement as having it does not increase the safety of a practice.

It is my belief that to make homebirth with midwifery care illegal will have the following effects:

- * some women will chose to give birth at home without the care of a homebirth which has to be recognised as potentially more dangerous to mother and child than birthing under the care of a midwife

- * other women will feel resigned to birth at a hospital which will increase the demand on hospitals that are already struggling to provide care for those who need or want to birth there.

I gave birth to my first child in water at a family birth centre. Many of the midwives who I saw there also attend homebirths. Although I had a positive birthing experience I have no doubt that should I become pregnant again I would like to birth at home. Otherwise I run the risk of not making it to the distant family birth centre in time or using a closer hospital which will not permit me to birth in the way I wish to, and will likely mean my family will be separated soon after the birth which in unsatisfactory.

Homebirth is a very valid choice for pregnant women. It is a safe choice that many women wish to make. It is an encouraged and supported choice in many countries. To make it illegal in Australia is a massive step backwards and erodes women's right to choose where and how they birth.

Regards,

Rachel McBride