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NORTHLAND AREA HEALTH BOARD

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MEMO TO: TERRI WEBBY, PRINCIPAL PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE

COPY TO:	**FILE:**
Dr J Hall Chairman Obstetrics Standard Review Committee	
FROM: DR SLOAN, MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH	**DATE:** 17/4/89

SUBJECT:

DOMICILIARY MIDWIVES STANDARDS REVIEW COMMITTEE

I refer to the letter of the 3rd May to you from Feliz Barnett concerning the above situation and as a putative committee member of this body I would be grateful if you could put over the gist of the points below.

I find it a bit ironic when the Medical Council is receiving some criticism about doctors being judges of their own conduct that such a body as the above should set itself up as a arbiter of standards. Even more so as unlike the multifamous interests and viewpoints of doctors this group is (in the main) professional and "consumers" alike, a partisian group with a single issue/interest perspective - that issue being one form of care as opposed to, and in competition with a more conventional form of care. The deliberations of such a group could be regarded as likely to be biased.

However, wearing my quality assurance "hat" I welcome any objective deliberations by such a group interested in maintaining and improving standards. I suspect that practitioners will accept fiercer criticism and in a better spirit when (and if) it is delivered in a risk free environment by "one of their own".

That being said the group should be under no illusion that their activities are other than unofficial and supplementary to the existing system of officers and committees with statutory roles and official standing respectively, who have responsibilities in the monitoring of matters relating to domiciliary deliveries and homebirths, and in maintaining professional standards.

David Sloan

Dr David S G Sloan
Medical Officer of Health

Letter to Terri Webby 15.6.89

Re. Dr Sloans response to the the formation of the DMSRC:- This committee includes representative recipients of the service, unlike the medical profession whose Medical Council excludes lay people from its disciplinary investigations and procedures. The establishment of the DMSRC has also been a joint effort by the providers and recipients of domiciliary practise which lends such a move enormous credibility. I think Sloans comments about being unofficial are irrelevant and are best ignored. This committee is very official and the sooner it is up and running and acting in a visible capacity - the better.

I think Dr Sloan should be informed that the home birth movement is not in competition with or opposed to hosp. birth, which is what I presume he means "by a more conventional form of care". The philosophy of the HB movement is one that supports options and choice. It clearly states a belief that the HB movement is pro-homebirth and NOT anti-hospital.

If he considers our belief that childbirth is a normal physiological process only requiring medical assistance when pathology occurs as a biased viewpoint, then I think he needs to do some serious soul searching about what he is defining as normal childbirth. Perhaps he needs some clarification on the very differing roles between midwifery and obstetric practise.

Actually, I suspect that it is on that issue that most Drs meet a stumbling block in regard to the role of mws. We need to spend more time on accentuating the difference between the roles and in fact the compatibility of the roles. If he can understand this, I think he will find it easier to accept the submission proposed. GPs will benefit from this, as dmws won't take clients awy from their family practice, whereas a woman changing to a HB supporting GP will usually choose to remain with that GP so he loses the whole family off his books. GPs will no longer have to feel compromised if they choose not to take on obstetrics within their practice, but the choice to do so will still remain even when the mws role is re-instated.

I hope these comments will be of some assistance, and do keep in touch. I will be in Kaukapakapa until approx. the end of Sept. but c/-1 Strid Road, Te Atatu South, Auckland 8 will always reach me if you are uncertain of my whereabouts.

Keep up the good work Terri and good hearing from you.

Regards,
Judi Strid.