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The New Zealand Home Birth Association

The New Zealand Home Birth Association,
P.O. Box 7093, Wellesley St., Auckland, 1.

Affiliated with NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for PARENTS and
PROFESSIONALS for SAFE ALTERNATIVE CHILDBIRTH, U.S.A.

15th February 1981

Dear Committee,

Conference is now only a few months away and I'm sure Wellington Branch would like an estimate of the numbers expected to attend from your area.

I enclose a statistical data collection form. I imagine that you all have copies of this form and xerox more when you need them and send them to Graeme and Rosemary, 11 Te Aroha St, Hamilton. They are collating the information enclosed in the forms and will hopefully prepare an analysis for conference, N.Z. Medical Journal and which can be used by branches for more publicity in April. Please ensure that domiciliary midwives are all provided with an adequate number of forms and encouraged to send them in promptly. It seems that good statistics are going to be invaluable in establishing our case from talking to Auckland doctors.

Elisabeth Chisholm's new address is 2 Cornish Place, Feilding and not 36 Duke Street. Could you please correct your newsletter mailing list as she receives them for the Manawatu Branch.

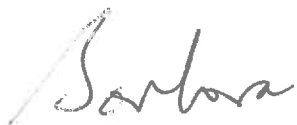
We have fortunately found another three midwives in Auckland but demand for home birth is still outstripping the number of midwives. We would be interested to know if that is the case wherever there is a registered midwife.

Auckland has been giving some thought, given the miserable salaries that midwives get, to the relationship that midwives could have within the amalgamated Hospital Board and Health Dept system that exists in Wellington and Northland. Auckland is supposed to begin a merger soon and we would be interested in ideas on the possible

relationship which midwives could establish as primary health care practitioners within this system. A information booklet can be obtained from Wellington Health Services Advisory Committee P.O. Box 27-177, WELLINGTON. Midwives are presently private contractors with government and therefore do not qualify for minimum rates of pay, statutory holidays, accident compensation (in terms of time off with pay as the government doesn't pay levies), over time or general wage orders. As the regional secretary of the P.S.A. wrote when i enquired about possible cover by PSA, 'Our past experience has shown us that departments can act atrociously towards contractors engaged on a fee for service basis/^owithout concerted action by the contractors, change has not occurred'. Well the consumers of home birth are prepared to act and the midwives are keen. The missing element seems to be the G.P.'s. We are challenging some of the Auckland ones to take a more prominent position and set out their reasons for supporting home birth and G.P.'s in obstetrics. We seem to be fighting their battle too.

Please send in your statistics forms.

yours sincerely,



Barbara Macfarlane,
Secretary.

p.s. After much discussion with the midwives, who all opposed the concept of a requested payment by home birth parents to supplement their incomes, and some comment from doctors, who get twice as much as the midwives for their token part in a delivery, and opposed it too, the committee decided that it was probably unacceptable and have dropped the idea. However the draft letter is included in the newsletter. If branches have comments we would like to hear them. We find here that some parents do not even offer the midwife food at regular hours or after a long labour. It was to assist that we were thinking of steps we could take.