

Hospital complaint denied

WELLINGTON
A complaint to the race relations conciliator about Kenepuru Hospital's handling of a pregnant Samoan woman is "blatant politicking" and Wellington Hospital Board has nothing to hide, board members said yesterday.

The board's policy and finance committee yesterday confirmed a letter by its acting general manager, Mr John Rennie, denying allegations made in the complaint and allowing the race relations conciliator to interview any staff involved.

The board earlier heard that the woman, Ms

Salome Uilaa, had a miscarriage at home after returning from the hospital.

Committee member Vye Hepburn said it was ironic that a board member, the Rev. Don Borrie, brought the complaint.

"In view of the adverse publicity the board received in many areas, and very little about the good things the board is doing, this is totally unnecessary," she said.

A report was received from the board's acting chief medical officer which satisfied board members that Ms Uilaa

had been treated with dignity and sensitivity.

In his letter, Mr Rennie said the board refuted an allegation that Ms Uilaa was not offered or helped to receive immediate medical attention.

While the accident and emergency department was closed the woman was given significant help to contact the emergency GP service.

Mr Rennie said it appeared that a nurse might inadvertently have given inaccurate information about the charge for ambulance transport between Kenepuru and Wellington hospitals.

Birthday Sale



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Speaking up for home birth

The home birth movement is calling for the forming of domiciliary midwifery standards review committees.

A proposal on these lines from the Domiciliary Midwives Society was endorsed by the national home birth conference in Wellington at the weekend.

Society secretary Bronwen Pelvin, of Upper Moutere, said the committees' purpose would be to oversee the practice of domiciliary midwives.

"We feel that doctors and obstetricians are not in the best position to assess what we do, as they often lack understanding of the philosophy behind domiciliary practice," she said.

The proposal calls for the committees to be comprised of a principal public health nurse, a domiciliary midwife, another practising midwife, a general practitioner who attends home birth, and four consumers nominated by local home birth associations.

The conference, attended by 300 people, also passed a remit to produce a cost effectiveness study of home birth.

"In this time of Rogernomics it is essential to produce evidence that home birth saves money," said Wellington Home Birth Association resource person Madeliene Gooda.

The conference was opened by the Minister of Social Welfare, Dr Cullen, who told delegates that he had been a home-birth baby in the United Kingdom.

In 1987 home births in New Zealand totalled 500, or one per cent of the national total.

There are about 2000 members of home birth associations nationally, with 70 in Nelson.