20001-113-003

Domiciliary Midwives Society of New Zealand.

Westbank Road R.D. 1 Motueka 21/5/91

Dear Sally,

Please find enclosed the letter in support of Direct Entry Midwifery courses. I thought I'd take this chance to put down in a letter the points I made to you on the phone last night.

I am aware that it is now NZCOM policy to support the degree option for midwifery education but there was much concern expressed at the DMS meeting and the Home Birth Conference about the way in which this decision was made. Firstly, in considering the matter, we only received your paper prior to the National Committee meeting and then at the meeting Wellington put forward its views in support of a degree. There was nothing from the Direct Entry Task Force and I understand from Judi Strid that they were not asked to contribute to the discussion. As they were the impetus for the Direct Entry Midwifery course in the first place and this was prior to the College being set up, I feel this is an oversight, to say the least.

The strong feeling from the floor of the Home Birth Conference is that Midwifery is not perceived as an academic career. Concern was strongly expressed by consumers, that the idea of midwifery being a degree will, in itself, act as a barrier to entry for a significant number of women including those from other ethnic groups. As the Home Birth movement has been one of the strongest supporters of the midwife and has in it a large number of women who have been hanging out for direct entry midwifery to start, I feel that we, that is NZCOM, have not given adequate consultation time before coming to our decision. What we can do about this now, I am unsure but I know that there is a lot of resistance at grass-roots level to midwifery being a degree.

Another point made was that the direct entry couse is an experimental programme and the degree course would also be experimental and it is not a good idea to run two experimental programmes at the same time. There was no problem

at all with the idea of a diploma being given at the completion o of the midwifery course; some people felt that registration as a midwife was quite sufficient. There was even abit of acceptance of the idea of a diploma of midwifery being a first step and ther there could be a further educational step leading to a degree in midwifery so that there was a career path. But again the strong feeling is that no-one should have to get a degree to practice as a midwife - hands-on and all that!

Yet another point was that if the degree programme was established, who would we get to evaluate it as we have no midwives with a degree in midwifery here. Import "overseas experts"? Very bad idea. Midwifery needs to reflect the needs in its own country, not that of others.

Enough. I'm sure you get the general drift. Where we go from here, I'm not sure. I have to write to the College from the DMS and I know the Home Birth Conference will as well.

Two other points: Bachelor of Midwifery is a real worry; reflecting as it does the whole patriachal structure of education in the whole patriachal system. Where did you get this from? It seems highly inappropriate to apply the word 'Bachelor' to anything to do with the midwifery profession which a profession based on women's responses to women's needs.

I also noticed that you hadunder childhealth "following the child from neonate to school age".

This is a new development; midwives traditionally move on from dealing with women when they are recovered from childbirth. And midwives deal 'with women', not 'with babies'. The reality of practice is that we haven't got the time to continue our role beyond the six week period because we're moving on to the next lot of mothers. Again, where was the discussion and consultation on this one?

Sorry, to be such a downer; you know that I am in total support of direct-entry as is the DMS: we need time to consider the implications of all this before something is in place that we can't change and we find we've gone the wrong way.

With many warm thoughts to you,

bronwer

X

Westbank Road,

R.D. 1,

Motueka.

21/5/91

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing as the secretary of the Domiciliary Midwives Society (Inc) to support the Direct Entry Midwifery course leading to midwifery registration.

The course was originally outlined by the Direct Entry Task Force of the Save The Midwives organisation and is supported by the New Zealand College of Midwives (Inc).

The Domiciliary Midwives Society is looking forward to the establishment of direct entry midwifery courses as an opportunity to increase the numbers of midwives educated and in practice in New Zealand.

The Society believes that midwifery is distinct from nursing in both its philosophy and practice. It is based on the normal, physiological function of pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium occurring in healthy women. For midwives to be able to support, encourage and enhance women's experience of childbirth, it is important that they be educated in a way that emphasises the normality of the process.

Bronwen Pelvin

Secretary

Domiciliary Midwives

Society.