



20001-113-008

27 November 1987

Wendy Stevens  
17 Brinkley Road  
TAURANGA

Dear Ms Stevens

I have noted the views contained in your letter of 12 July concerning the training of midwives in New Zealand.

I cannot agree that midwifery has been "reduced" to an option within the Advanced Diploma Course in Nursing. The midwifery course meets all the criteria for registration as a midwife prescribed by the Nursing Council of New Zealand. Any decision on whether the midwifery course remains within the Advanced Diploma or not, will not affect the Nursing Council's standards for registration as a midwife.

Midwifery is considered to be an advanced nursing course, which builds on to the broadly based comprehensive nursing courses. These latter courses have a 'health' rather than 'illness' focus. I suggest you contact the Head of Department, Nursing Studies, at one of the fifteen technical institutes offering comprehensive nursing courses. Waikariki Community College, (Private Bag, Rotorua), would probably be nearest to you. This would enable you to discuss the nature of the course that you would be required to take, if you are interested in later undertaking the midwifery course to prepare you to practise as a midwife. There is provision for some cross-crediting of previously held qualifications, eg, chemistry, if it has been part of the physiotherapy course.

The Department of Education recently published its report "An Evaluation of Advanced Diploma in Nursing Courses". Following the release of this report, my department has been investigating possible alternatives to the present system of training midwives. Any alternative must meet the needs of both the public and provider groups. Additionally, with the small and widely spread population in New Zealand, it is important that women in childbirth have access to as full a range of skills as possible. Therefore midwifery will continue to be advanced nursing preparation. Direct entry courses are not seen as being appropriate.

Yours sincerely

David Caygill  
Minister of Health

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