

16 December 1983

Dear Jean

In the last National Homebirth Association Newsletter it was reported that both New South Wales and South Australia have formed domiciliary midwives' groups, as we in New Zealand have. Henny Ligtermoet, National Co-ordinator of Homebirth Australasia suggested that domiciliary midwives 'down under' should set up a domiciliary midwives alliance similar to the Midwives Alliance of North America.

No doubt this issue will come up at the Homebirth Australasia Conference in April (19 - 22) in Blue Mountains. As I plan to attend this Conference I would appreciate some feedback from you on this question. Personally, I like the idea, but how do you feel about? Could you drop me a line and let me have your opinion on this as soon as possible?

Last year at the Homebirth Australasia Conference, Sydney, it was decided to standardise the domiciliary midwives' stat forms to make collation of stats more uniform. One of the Sydney domiciliary midwives, Maggie Lecky-Thompson, and I were delegated to get this underway. It has taken us some time to get into gear! Earlier, Gillian McNicol, Secretary for our Domiciliary Midwives Society (DMS) sent out a preliminary form to you which had been compiled by Maggie from our N.Z. and the N.S.W. forms. There was very limited feedback from this, but on what there was I compiled another form based on Maggie's plus our old form and suggestions which came in. Now, this enclosed stat form has come back from Maggie. It has gone forward to Stan Gillanders for an assessment on ease of computerizing, as have the other drafts.

What is your response to this enclosed draft?

Do you have any serious opposition to anything on it?

Would you be prepared to fill it in as from January 1984?

My experience with filling in the old stat form has been that it is easiest done right after the delivery when one is filling in the innumerable other forms - at least this one is in our interests! At our Homebirth Conference, Auckland, it was suggested that any stat form might be given to the woman having the baby and asking her to be responsible for filling it in, and your local HBA could see about forwarding them to Stan periodically.

Maggie is preparing a paper on homebirth stats for the ICM Conference in Sydney, September 1984. She would like to be able to include the N.Z. stats in her survey. Her reasons, as outlined to Stan, are as follows:

- 1) It will boost the numbers. We assume your outcomes to be equally as boast-worthy as ours!
- 2) We have achieved some measure of domiciliary status, due to strength of numbers, some articulate and powerful proponents - politically and media-wise; and finally due to the stats we've been able to pull out every time an issue about homebirth or domiciliary midwives is raised;

3) It gives us a united front in the eyes of the rest of the world that must be of advantage to both countries.

This united front was put to the test recently when a Tasmanian domiciliary registered midwife, Terri Stockdale, was charged with professional misconduct. She went to a lady in labour, and on arrival found there was no F.H. sounds. She suggested transfer to hospital but the lady felt she would sooner deliver a stillborn at home. Terri agreed to this. The local hospital board laid a complaint because Terri did not call a doctor. Henny called for international solidarity which was given, with telegrams pouring in, not only from all states in Australia, but also from N.Z. and America (NAPSAC).

Right now in Australia they are very concerned about our battle over midwives in general and the domiciliary option in particular. In N.S.W. after seven years of debate, rallies, confrontation, their State Minister of Health has rejected the whole concept of regulations which certain factions had been trying to have put through parliament to restrict the N.S.W.'s domiciliary midwives rights of practice. In N.S.W. midwives are autonomous!

Have a nice Xmas and a reproductive 1984! And let me have some feedback on the questions. Thanks.

Do you know about the Save the Midwives Society? The next newsletter will be out early in January and will keep you up with the developments on the Nurses Amendment Bill, also with developments overseas. The sub is \$2. The address is 24 Ashton Rd, Auckland 3.

Gillian McNicol's baby is due in a few days. She will be the third of our Auckland 'doms' to have babies this year: Rhonda had a daughter, Phoebe; Sian also had a daughter, Rhiannon.

Regards,

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