

MINUTES OF HOME BIRTH DOCTORS' & MIDWIVES' MEETING HELD ON 19TH APRIL 1991

Present: Graham Gulbransen, Lee Nixon, Amanda Greenwood, Maggie Cropper, Brenda Hinton, Barbara Harvey, Joan Donley, Di Nash, Joan Miller, Carolyn Young, Marjet Pot, Linda McKay, Veronika Muller.

Apologies: John Nealie, Joyce Cowan, Gillian Sawers, Sian Burgess, Heather Waugh, Rhonda Jackson, Sean McGarry, Jenny Woodley.

1) **Ann Nightingales letter to G.Ps're booking & transfer of women planning home births:** - The H.B.A. and 4 GPs' have replied to this letter. Every G.P. should reply, as not only is it a breach of patients' rights, but it is also an erosion of the G.Ps' contracts with the Auckland Area Health Board. We have studied a copy of the contract for access given to GPs by the Area Health Board. This contract states that the practitioner shall comply with the instructions or directions of the Medical Superintendent of any hospital where he/she may be attending patients "(clause 3 (b)(ii). However Clause 4 gives the practitioner the right of appeal to the Board (our emphasis) over any matter arising out of Clause 3(b) above but this right shall in no way affect the Practitioner obligations under clause 3(b) pending the decision of the Board.

We strongly urge GPs to write to the Board appealing against these directives. The HBA will continue to get these directives revoked on the basis of breach of patients rights but a two-pronged attack will be more effective.

The Patient Advocate at NWH has taken up this matter with Ann Nightingale who refused to acknowledge that it constituted a breach of patient rights. She did however concede that it was both unfair and a breach of contract to apply this new directive to women whose bookings have been accepted. We therefore suggest that doctors give women who have had their bookings a NWH accepted a copy of the letter of acceptance which they can present should they be transferrred.

Both doctors & midwives need to encourage those women who have yet to book to write to Ann Nightingale and to the Consumer Complaints Officer at the Board complaining about the denial of their rights. Members of the AHBA would be happy to help any woman write such a letter so feel free to give them our phone no. (780 557 or 787 614).

2) **Health Benefits Claims Update:** It appears that Drs & Midwives are still owed money from the Health Benefits Office. There was discussion had about whether the Government would continue to pay for two practitioners to attend births. The College of Midwives Board of Management has started negotiations with the Health Benefits Office. The Medical Assn. has been asked to participate but has so far has declined. The N.Z. College of Midwives are pushing for provision to be made to pay 2 practitioners to attend home births. Doctors need to contact Phil Rushmer, your rep on this negotiating committee urging that the Medical Assn. participate in negotiations and promote this provision for payment of 2 practitioners at home births.

3) A new list giving names of all Doctors doing Home Births is available and is enclosed with these minutes.

4) Ideas for Fundraising a to assist DM Ruth Nicholson and her son, who has cerebral palsey, to go to Hungary for treatment. If you have any suggestions please contact the HBA office ph. 780 557.

5) **Transfers to N.W.H:** At present neither doctors nor midwives are getting a warm reception when they transfer to hospital. The reasons for this are many. It was decided to send a letter to the N.W.H. Delivery Suites asking that, a staff member who supports Home Birth and is happy to work with HB GPs be assigned to women who are transferred from home. This will be sent from the Home Birth Association.

It was also suggested that we invite the Charge Nurses from the Hospital to the next meeting of Home Birth Doctors & Midwives so that we can improve the transfer process.

Next Meeting July 1st.

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