

20073-24-115

Peter Friedlander

M.B. Ch.B. (N.Z.), D.C.H. (England)

TELEPHONES—

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1208 DOMINION ROAD,
MT. ROSKILL,
AUCKLAND 4.

8th March, 1982.

Mr. Aussie Malcolm.
Minister of Health.
House of Representatives.
Wellington.

COPY

Dear Mr. Malcolm,

Home Births.

During my years in General Practice I have become very sympathetic to the minority group of women who prefer to deliver their babies at home rather than in Hospital. They describe an experience more joyful and fulfilling than would be possible for them in Hospital, and their record of success in N.Z. (live healthy babies and mothers) is very good, according to figures supplied by the Home Birth Association.

My sympathetic feelings are not shared by all Doctors and I am therefore worried that the Maternity Services Committee may recommend legislation or sanctions to coerce some of these women to be delivered in hospital against their will. This could not be justified unless evidence is produced to show that these women would have fared better in hospital than they did at home, and I don't think that there is such evidence.

Fortunately you will probably be seeking consumer opinion as well, as the consumers are poorly represented on the above-mentioned committee, and I hope that you will take note of any submissions made by the Home Birth Association, who I believe are a very responsible and dedicated group. I believe that in the absence of cogent reasons to the contrary, home birth should remain a recognised alternative, and the only change I would advocate is that the domiciliary service gets a fair share of the funding.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the M.P. for Mt. Albert, who has expressed an interest in Women's Rights (though I have no reason to think that you are not sympathetic).

Finally I wish to congratulate you on your rapid rise to an important position in the Cabinet, and I am pleased that the National Government has once again found a very able man for this demanding portfolio.

Yours sincerely,

Copy for
Home Birth Assoc

Peter Friedlander