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The New Zealand Home Birth Association

Waikato Branch
34 Betting Road
Hamilton

URGENT TO ALL BRANCHES

We know it is late to be providing branches with more material to consider before the conference regarding the future of the Home Birth movement in N.Z. but because of our particular situation here in Hamilton we ask that Branches consider carefully what we have to say.

Over the years we have had 3 Dom Midwives. The first two were (are) receptive, caring people who tried their hardest to make our births the experience WE wanted. Over the past year we have had a totally different type of midwife, whose goals are somewhat different to those of the group. Working with her has created a LOT of tension and division within our Branch. Our main complaint is that she is not prepared to allow parents to take the responsibility which we think is theirs. In short she is the epitome of what most parents are trying to escape, by having their baby at home. For those who just want a home birth that's fine, but many of us want to EXPERIENCE childbirth, with a midwife who is caring and sympathetic.

Over the months we have had to put considerable pressure on her and the only reason this has been effective was because of the imagined weight of a NATIONAL body with the same beliefs, goals and ideals.

This however is still not enough. She has been working independently to secure a position as a hospital based Dom. Midwife. She can then become independent of us and have hospital approval to practice and gain clients. A position we cannot support for many reasons.

Up until now, other branches have been lucky attracting midwives who are genuinely caring about the needs of H.B. parents but it may not always be this way.

Just having our babies at home shouldn't be the ultimate goal of H.B. parents. We MUST BE THE GUARDIANS OF NATURAL CHILDBIRTH as well.

It could be, that if the Waikato hospital Board creates a position of Community midwife, as our midwife hopes, that other Boards will follow suit and eventually all Dom. Midwives will have to be employed by them. (All then under the direct control of hospital obstetricians) This could then signal the end of home birth. We believe that for this reason alone we need a STRONG NATIONAL body.

WHY haven't we employed a lawyer (preferably someone within the movement) to rewrite a constitution which is SIMPLE leaving groups autonomous as long as they practise within the NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY. It could have been written loosely enough for national positions to be individual OR group based (I.E those willing to do the work being able to do it , where-ever, who-ever they are)

WHY is it expensive to run a national body? The only costs need to be mail to keep each group informed.

Even if the Nat. Body is just a figurehead with no real power they add weight in the eyes of the public and medical profession.

From the majority of literature we have recieved, we get the feeling that disincorporation of the Association is inevitable. We feel very sorry about this however if this IS the case we must have something to replace it.

We see that the Next best thing is to IMMEDIATELY form a
FEDERATION OF HOME BIRTH ASSOCIATIONS

but we MUST have a common philosophy and common goals (AIMS)

What is legally involved with this action????????????????????

If people agree that this is the case , group reps MUST have discussed with their groups what they think a national philosophy must be and also common aims and objectives of a Federation.

We believe that this action is going to place much more pressure and responsibility on groups and individuals, most of whom are already physically and emotionally tied up with young families but that is a decision for groups to make.

We still feel that a National Spokesperson and a Medical Advisory Board comprised of midwives and sympathetic doctors (both local and international) who would be prepared to speak out publicly when necessary, would be invaluable;

PLEASE CONSIDER THESE POINTS CAREFULLY AND COME TO THE CONFERENCE READY FOR PRE-DECIDED ACTION.

We hope for a profitable conference.