

Maternity care costs topic of new controversy

NEW Zealand doctors may decide that pregnant women should pay part of the cost of their visits to GPs, but the Minister of Health (Mr Gair) says it won't happen.

If a remit before the Medical Association's council meeting on October 3 is passed doctors will ask Mr Gair for changes in the Social Security Act to let them charge more.

Pregnant women would have to pay for part of both their visits to their doctors and the delivery of their babies.

Doctors believe the benefit they receive from the Health Department for the

under the Act doctors must accept the benefit as full payment for maternity services.

"As far as any increase in the maternity benefit is concerned, the benefit negotiating committee will begin discussions in November," he said.

"Any proposal arising out of the committee's deliberations would be given con-

sideration by the Government as a new policy for the next financial year."

For normal services the benefits doctors receive are: first ante natal visit, \$8; usual attendance, \$4; urgent attendance, \$6; conduct of baby and delivery, \$60; post natal care of mother and baby, \$4 for each attendance; post natal examination, \$8.50 for mother and \$4.75 for baby.