



For Immediate Release

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Canterbury Has Enough Midwives

The following comments can be attributed to **Karen Guilliland, New Zealand College of Midwives CEO:**

Despite earlier reports calling for midwives to head to Christchurch, we want to assure everyone that there are enough midwives in Canterbury working with women and their families.

Midwives throughout the country (and internationally) are rallying to help women who are leaving Christchurch to have their babies. Their midwifery colleagues who are left behind with no income, no homes and are away from family are also offering support and expertise.

The NZ College of Midwives national office staff have met today after several days of close liaison with midwives, DHB's and the health sector in general. All NZCOM staff and their families have been accounted for.

The College's head office in Manchester Street in Edgeware, on the edge of the four avenues cordon, is closed and off limits to all staff and visitors – it has at this stage been deemed unsafe.

The latest information for women who need a midwife in another city outside Christchurch, is that midwives are being rallied to be there to provide that support. We are advising pregnant women to contact their nearest maternity unit in the area they relocate to, to find this information. NZCOM regional chairs are co-ordinating their own areas and contacting midwives and their local DHB to make this easier for women.

To reiterate, women are entitled to LMC (Lead Maternity Care) midwifery services for themselves and their newborn for up to 6 weeks, regardless of where they are staying.

It is very humbling to know that midwives taking over the caseloads of Christchurch midwives are donating half their payment / income to the original LMC in the quake damaged city.

It's a huge boost to the morale of all of us to see the generosity of this wonderful profession of which I feel so proud to be a member. Women and babies are our focus and our first priority as is the case with all health workers and others at this time of emergency and tragedy.

ENDS

Karen Guilliland NZCOM CEO 0275 405449
Norma Campbell NZCOM Midwifery Advisor 0272 526207

Ali Jones (Comms Advisor) 027 247 3112
Anne Yates NZCOM President 0274902 400 or 021902 400 and is in Auckland.

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