



# NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES (INC)

**17<sup>th</sup> December, 2009**

## **Press release**

### **Midwives safe and well monitored**

“Today’s headline in the Dominion Post “Delivery by new midwives dangerous” does not reflect the HDC report and is inaccurate and misleading,” says Karen Guilliland, CEO of the New Zealand College of Midwives.

“The College reassures the public of the well established Quality Assurance framework which governs the practice of midwifery for all midwives including new graduates. Consumers can be assured the midwifery profession provides safe and excellent services” says Rose Barker, President of the College.

“Midwives clinical decision making is legislated, proscribed, guided and monitored by the following frameworks:

- The International Confederation of Midwives definition, scope of practice, competencies and education standards of the midwife
- The Midwifery three year undergraduate degree education program (the academic year has recently been lengthened to 45 weeks to assist students with access to more clinical experience)
  - Midwifery Council of New Zealand state examination which registers midwives
  - The Councils three yearly recertification program for all midwives (which includes emergency skill update workshops, CPR, infant resuscitation and decision making)
  - The New Zealand College of Midwives Midwifery Standards Review every two years covering;
    - competency
    - standards
    - ethics
    - outcomes (including referral and transfer)
  - National Guidelines for Referral and Transfer to Specialist Services
  - New Zealand College of Midwives (NZCOM) Standards of Practice, and Code of Ethics.
  - NZCOM’s Resolution Committees for low level complaints from consumers
  - Section 88 Service Specifications (includes volumes and specific services required)
  - DHB access to hospital agreements for Lead Maternity Carers
  - All statutory agencies including
    - Health and Disability Commissioner
    - Midwifery Council of New Zealand

- Health Practitioners Disciplinary Tribunal
- Coroners Court
- DHB Sentinel event process
- Civil courts
- Employment Contracts and performance review
- Perinatal and Maternal Mortality Committee
- Ministry of Health audit

Mrs Barker concludes “There is no evidence that the clinical judgment by midwives in the process of referring and transferring care is an issue of general concern for the profession or the maternity service overall. Midwifery has responded diligently and built up a significant QA framework over the years that exceed most other disciplines, including medicine, to ensure this remains so. The outcomes for mothers and babies under midwife care improve every year and NZ maternity services compare exceptionally well with other countries.”

“Individual cases such as the Wellington one are always examined for how they can inform continuing quality improvement in maternity services and will continue to do so”, says Mrs Guilliland.

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