

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia

3 March 2017

To whom it may concern,

Re: NMBA Code of Conduct for Midwives

I would like to raise my concerns about the draft Code of conduct for midwives. The following three issues are of concern to me as a practicing midwife and educator; the use of the term Person Centred Care; the risk of combining nursing and midwifery codes; and the replacement of the term 'partnership' when describing the relationship between the midwife and the woman.

- **Person Centred Care**

The draft Code refers to Person Centred Care as opposed to Woman Centred Care. Midwife means 'with woman' and this meaning shapes midwifery's philosophy, work and professional relationships. Midwifery is a woman-centred primary health care discipline founded on relationships between women and midwives. Woman centred care is a focus of the NMBA Competency Standards for the Midwife (NMBA 2006) which have been used in education and regulation for more than a decade. This concept is central to the ANMAC Midwife Accreditation Standards (ANMAC 2014) which directs the education of all midwives in the country. Woman centred care is also a global concept that is promoted and supported by the International Confederation of Midwives and in the Lancet Series of Midwifery (Renfrew, McFadden et al. 2014). I feel that Person Centred Care does not describe the central concept of midwifery.

- **Combined Nursing and Midwifery Code**

The Codes should reflect the unique nature of each profession so I do not support combining codes for midwifery and nursing. Through the similarity of the draft documents I believe this is a risk. In 2010, legislation recognised midwifery as a distinct, separate profession to nursing, and since this time a separate register for midwives has been instituted. In 2015, the Independent Review of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professions made Recommendation 27. This was that the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law 2009* be amended to reflect and recognise that nursing and midwifery are two professions regulated by one National Board. This was in light of Australian midwifery having its own internationally recognised definition, scope of practice, national code of ethics and professional conduct; decision-making framework; continuing professional development and standards review; as well as education and practice standards (ANMC 2006, ANMAC 2013). The two professions have distinct and different skills and practices. Regulators have a responsibility to properly inform the public and employers to ensure protection of the public.

- **Working in Partnership**

As a midwife I believe that the work we do is in partnership with the woman which aligns with the philosophy of midwifery care. This Partnership Model has been part of midwifery since 1995 when it was articulated by our colleagues in New Zealand (Guilliland and Pairman 1995, Leap and Pairman 2006). Similarly, the content under 'Boundaries' in the draft Code is not on par with the Continuity of Care Model where midwives demonstrate their professional judgement within the Partnership Model.

Thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jane Morrow
Midwife

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