



## National Council of Women of New Zealand

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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### **Submission to the Ministry of Health on the Consultation on Maternity Service Specifications**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 nationally organised societies. It has 34 branches spread throughout the country to which women from some 150 societies are affiliated.

#### **General Comments**

NCWNZ has maintained a policy on Maternity Services since the 1920s. You will be aware that our members were among those included in a follow-up Maternity Services Survey (February 2002). This survey showed an improvement in aspects of these services from those revealed by the results of the earlier survey taken in 1999. Members of the Health Standing Committee and some branch members understand the need to revise service specifications and the need to have clear guidelines for secondary maternity services. Generally our members agree with and support these specifications.

#### **Specific Comments**

##### 4.0 Access

##### 4.1 Consumer costs:

4.1.1 We agree that maternity services will remain free of charge for all women. It is our belief, however, that in some facilities while the basic services are free, some women are charged for some "extra" services, mainly food or wine. Our members' concern is that neither these "extra" services, nor charging for them, should be an option.

4.1.2 Our members strongly agree that women must have it explained to them that it is an option to be referred to a private specialist, but that this may result in a charge to them personally.

##### 4.3 Distance, and 4.4 Time:

Members agree that the services be provided both in inpatient and out patient settings. Rural women continue to have difficulty with access and time issues.

##### 5.1 Consultation services for outpatients:

5.1.2 (b) It is pleasing to see that lactation consultation for women experiencing breast-feeding complications is available. We understand that the LMC remains responsible in this area and would strongly support them to refer women for consultation as necessary.

##### 5.1.3 Clear directions - agreed

##### 5.2 Consultation services for Inpatients.

This section is clear and can be accepted without comment.

##### 5.5 Emergency services

Our rural members commented that they were pleased to see 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 and the clear responsibilities set out there.





8.0 Quality Requirements:

8.1 and 8.2

NCWNZ supports all quality requirements for better outcomes for mother and baby.

**Conclusion**

NCWNZ's Health Standing Committee members thank you for the opportunity to comment on these specifications. They find them clear and concise. Our members further agree that there should not be any need for women to pay for basic maternity services but they also understand that one may choose to attend a specialist and that if that option is chosen payment is expected to be made.

Thank you for asking us to comment. We look forward to seeing the final document in the future.

Beryl Anderson  
National President

Eileen Imlach  
Consumer Affairs Standing Committee