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RURAL WOMEN NEW ZEALAND (INC) SUBMISSION

Primary Maternity Services Notice Review 2021

Introduction

Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on proposed changes the Primary Maternity Services Notice pursuant to Section 88 of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000 (the Notice).

Rural Women New Zealand supports the increased funding for maternity services in New Zealand and looks forward to seeing this remove stresses on pregnant women and their whānau. We affirm and acknowledge the work of former Minister Genter in acknowledging further support is needed for rural maternity care.

However, we are concerned that rural communities, families and pregnant women will be unfairly disadvantaged in maternity care because rural midwives can't afford to continue supporting pre- and ante-natal care and safe delivery of babies in rural New Zealand.

RWNZ supports the submission from the College of Midwives in its entirety.

Specific Concerns

1. RWNZ would like to see equity of access to care and provision for home visits by midwives and other maternity practitioners to women ante-natally and post-natally who reside in rural New Zealand as this fits into the Ministry's aim to support those who cannot access care outside of their home easily.
2. The change to where travel for labour and birth is not funded unfairly disadvantages rural midwives who may need to travel significant distances to access maternity facilities.
3. Current rural post-natal travel modules offer a buffer for the additional costs borne by rural midwives (which are not just travel related). The proposed new method does not offer any rural differential, it assumes that rural midwives will travel more kms than urban counterparts, however, it ignores their isolation issues.

4. The proposed travel reimbursement may disadvantage some rural midwives in comparison with current rural travel payments.
5. Managing log books may be administratively cumbersome in order to link travel claims to specific women in a rural midwife's caseload.
6. Presumably both the transfer fee and rural support fee are claimable when a rural transfer occurs from a rural area and LMC has called additional practitioner for support.
7. RWNZ is concerned about the removal of rural domicile codes from the Notice because we see no way to determine when this fee applies.
8. It appears that the rural subsidy funding formula for general practitioners acknowledges the rural context well, however this is not replicated in an equitable fashion in the model proposed for midwives.

Recommendations

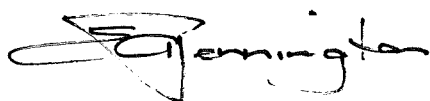
9. Review the current rural classification codes.
10. Form a working group which includes rural women to consider best approach to funding for rural maternity care.
11. Consider basing rural codes as per general practitioners an example of which is shown by the Northern Regional Alliance's Rural Subsidy Core Work Sheet.

About Rural Women New Zealand

12. Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) is a not-for-profit, member-based organisation that reaches into all rural communities and has an authoritative voice on rural environment, health, education, technology, business and social issues.
13. RWNZ strives to ensure that all rural residents, workers and families have equitable access to services, inequalities are addressed by Government, and the wellbeing of rural communities is considered from the beginning of all policy and legislative development.
14. RWNZ is affiliated to the Associated Country Women of the World and as such upholds all United Nations, ILO and WHO conventions and outcome statements as they relate to women and rural women in particular.
15. RWNZ would like to draw particular attention to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3, Good Health and Wellbeing which seeks to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.

We look forward to discussing this further with you in an oral submission.

Naku, noa nā



Liz Pennington

Chief Executive