

To whom it may concern

This is a personal submission to the Early Childhood Development Workforce Study Productivity Commission.

As a registered practising Maternal & Child Health Nurse in Victoria for 21 years, I have concerns about some of the recommendations from the Draft Report – specifically draft Recommendation 12.3.

I am pleased that Child Health Nurses will still be required to have general nursing and additional Child Health Nursing training but have concerns re dropping the requirement for midwifery. Without consensus on the professional training required for Child Health (CHN)/ Child and Family Health (C & FHV) Maternal and Child Health Nurses (M&CHN) and even on their name, it may be unwise and potentially dangerous to downgrade requirements for this important nursing role.

The skills of midwifery in addition to general and child health nursing has for me had many benefits. . We possess a body of knowledge that follows a woman's pregnancy through birth and the post natal period. Each of these parts of a woman's experience affects her role as mother and parent. I have always viewed Maternal and child health nursing as a continuation of the care given in this period rather than as a separate entity.

We care for families whose fertility, pregnancy and birth experiences affect them in many ways. Many women have had difficult pregnancies, traumatic labours, infertility and infertility treatment, miscarriages and perinatal loss. My midwifery experience has given me increased empathy and a more comprehensive understanding of the family's needs. My training has assisted me in recognising post natal depression and suicide risk.. Women do not visit their MCHN just to have their baby checked but also for personal care, advice and support at a very stressful time in their lives.

I have worked on the maternal and child health telephone line for many years. When a mother called re a crying baby one evening, it was my midwifery training that alerted me to the mothers own health risk as I listened to her coughing and breathing difficulty. My concern for her cardiac status which is a recognised complication of childbirth taught to all midwives, prompted me to ask her partner to call an ambulance. This mother had a cardiac arrest 15 minutes later but was resuscitated and survived because of the medical assistance which I had engineered .

I feel very concerned that the Child Health nursing role may be diminished by less qualified personnel without a standardised training performing some, or all of the tasks associated with caring for families with babies and young children. Maternal and Child Health Nursing is not just weighing and measuring babies and doing developmental assessments . The position is much more complex.

Yours sincerely

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Victorian Maternal and Child Health line