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The National Council of Women of New Zealand wants concrete improvements made to Maternity Services

In the wake of the announcement that an extra \$103.5 million will be spent on maternity services over the next four years, The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) has called for concrete improvements to be made to maternity services in New Zealand.

“There needs to be more clarity in regards to what actions the Government will be taking to improve the current level of maternity care.”

NCWNZ supports the allocation of \$38.5 million towards increasing the length of time new mothers can spend in hospital.

“We are appalled that many new mothers have been pressured into leaving hospital before they are ready”, says NCWNZ National President Elizabeth Bang “We want assurance that this will not happen again and that if a women feels pressured this can form the basis for a complaint”.

NCWNZ agrees with the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that early discharge after childbirth is one of the factors in the rising incidence of post-natal depression.

NCWNZ has recently passed a resolution urging further research into the mental health outcomes for women during pregnancy and throughout the post-natal phase.

In regards to the \$1.1 million extra funding for obstetric training or refresher courses for GPs, NCWNZ has serious concerns as to whether this will have any effect on the severely low numbers of GPs offering obstetric services.

If the Government wants to improve maternity services it needs to invest in building the maternity care workforce, says NCWNZ.

“When choosing a Lead Maternity Carer, women should have access to all forms of care available; this could be a General Practitioner, Independent or Hospital Midwife, an Obstetric Specialist or a combination. But the current across the board shortage has left many women with no choice at all.”

In a survey conducted by NCWNZ, many women stated that they would have liked to have had shared care between a GP and a midwife, and were dissatisfied that it was not available to them.

The current system of maternity care is fragmented, with a lack of collaboration and integration between the different care providers that needs to be addressed.

It is vital that the Government consider the full picture and take steps towards making a real difference in the delivery of maternity care.

Further Information:

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