

**Subject:** Submission - maternity review  
**Date:** Wednesday, 9 October 2019 5:42:35 AM

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Good morning

With thanks to recent media reporting into maternity services at TCH, I am now aware of the review. I wish to share my experiences in order to help shed light on my experiences.

As a public patient in 2014, both my baby and I were provided with sub standard care. My son was born in August 2014. After he became distressed in utero, we were taken to theatre for a cat A trial by forceps. My son was born not breathing with poor AGPAR scores. As he was being resuscitated, the obstetricians and midwives began fighting about an empty neonatal oxygen tank. It transpired that it hadn't been checked before entering theatre and therefore was unable to be used. They were more concerned about who would take the blame and the report than communicating what was happening to my partner and I. After 20 mins, breathing was established and my son was taken to NICU. We do not know how long it took to replace the tank and whether that contributed to the delay in establishing respiration.

I didn't see him for another 7 hours with the only update via my student midwife who was going between the two. The postnatal midwives were unable to update me on the condition of my critically ill son nor were they able to take me up to see him and try feeding. In the end, my student midwife broke protocol and wheeled me up herself.

I can not fault the care of the NICU staff. The care of the delivery team and post natal staff was appalling. No breastfeeding support and no debrief. No one visited to go through what had happened. Instead, I was told if I didn't feed my child his blood sugar levels would drop and he would be brain damaged.

I requested my notes 6 months later and was surprised to find I was meant to be referred to a clinic because of my severe tearing. I asked to see the attending obstetrician for a debrief who denied the incident of the oxygen tanks. I was then diagnosed with PTSD by a private obstetrician. I should have made a complaint but I felt belittled by the attending obstetrician and I felt that I would not be believed.

I had a second child in 2018. I opted for private care. It was the best decision I ever made and my obstetrician was able to identify early warning signs during my pregnancy and devise a plan to prevent a similar labour and delivery: I birthed at Calvary Bruce public and then went to the private hospital for post natal care. Despite having my baby being admitted to special care due to fluid on the lungs, I was able to breastfeed due to the exemplary care and support of the staff. It's disgusting that you need to pay thousands of dollars to receive basic support. It is not good enough. After delivery, my obstetrician asked me who did my previous episiotomy because it had been botched and I had cysts (which I did not realise due to my non-existent post natal care). She was very angry.

Neonatal resuscitation tanks should never be found to be empty. We live in the 21st century. Taxpayers should at least expect a functioning hospital which can deliver even the most basic services. We shouldn't have to pay for adequate care. In this instance, we were incredibly lucky that there was no lasting damage.

I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the review. I hope that this submission can help contribute to better care for all expecting and new mothers.

Kind regards