



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES  
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## Submission Cover Sheet

### Inquiry into Maternity Services in the ACT

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To whom it may concern,

I was told I could still send my submission for the mentioned enquiry. I apologise for the length of the email.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I'm a \_\_\_\_\_ Medical Graduate and mother of 2 Australian children, of which, the last one was born in the ACT.

Medical attention is different in my country, in so many ways. My first pregnancy was well controlled, monthly, with ultrasounds and checks by my obstetrician. Because I had done an internship in medicine, I knew I didn't want to go through a Vaginal birth, so even the C-section was booked ahead, and everything was planned.

When I feel pregnant the second time, I confess, I didn't know what the process was, nor what to do. Finally, after asking some other mothers, I was able to get an appointment with my midwife, in Canberra Hospital, she was amazing, she really tried to answer all my questions and guide me as much as possible.

At that time, I was working as a swimming instructor and a house cleaner, willing to work until I had to go into labor (or c-section, as it was my preference). From the time I was about 10 weeks pregnant, I had started feeling pain on the sides of my lower abdomen, which I didn't think were normal, but I still didn't pay much attention to them, and just stopped exercising, since it would hurt a lot more when doing so.

At the 20 weeks mark, on June 2017 my midwife sent a referral to the obstetrician, due to my pain complaints and the fact I felt back aches as well while working.

That was my first appointment with the obstetrician Dr. \_\_\_\_\_. He asked me why I didn't want a VB, and that I have to try, that it's not ok to have a c-section and so on. Then he asked me where I was from (to which I replied: \_\_\_\_\_) he asked if all my family was there (to which I said yes) and he asked about my mother and if she has been there for the first birth (again yes to both) and he said " That's what you need! You need your mother's support, being in such a culturally different place!" I asked about my symptoms and he said "well, you're pregnant! What do you expect?" I was told to attend the VBAC classes.

I went back home feeling quite confused and invalidated, like my symptoms didn't matter or I was just being a "wuss".

After the VBAC classes, I felt I had been mentioned all the risks I already knew a C-section had, for both myself and my baby.

My midwife managed to refer me to physiotherapy to see if they could help with my different pains and she mentioned Balancing Bellies, to which I started attending. As well as PANDSI, to help with this cultural, pregnancy depression I seemed to be having.

By then, the pain in my lower abdomen, and lower back, the nausea and the swelling on my feet had got a lot worse, and I even had a few episodes where I felt contractions while vomiting, to which my husband was really concerned.

I had a couple more appointments with my midwife and my gp, but apparently, everything

was going fine and if anything, I just had morning sickness.

By the 28th week I had an ultrasound, because my baby was small.

By the 34th week, I was in pain and nauseous most of the time, and none of my shoes would fit me, because my feet were really swollen at this stage, so I had to reduce my cleaning shifts.

I had another appointment with the obstetrician because of this on the 12th of October, and had again Dr. he alleged that I was complaining so much just because I wanted a C-section, and that he was not going to sign off on it, because I was "healthy" enough to try VB, when I told him that my other pregnancy was not like this one and that I was concerned, he said that every pregnancy is different as every child is different and that I have to have faith in God, that everything will be ok.

On the 23rd of October, I finally had a different obstetrician, but he still mentioned I had nothing to worry about because my blood pressure was "normal"(128/90mmHg). I must mention, my normal blood pressure had always kept at 90/60, even in my first pregnancy, it only got to 100/70.

On the 6th of November, I went to bed, feeling so much pain, I couldn't find a comfortable position to sleep, only to get up by 1 in the morning with strong contractions and non-stop vomiting, we put my 4 yo daughter in the car and drove to Canberra Hospital, straight into Maternity, they confirmed the contractions and had to see 3 times if I was dilated (I wasn't). At this point they couldn't get IV access to any of my veins because they were all contracted (I have very easy to access veins). My blood pressure was "really high", so they decided to perform a C-section, after which I stopped vomiting as soon as they took the placenta out. I was then diagnosed with Pre-eclampsia. Obviously, as soon as he heard this, my husband googled it, and found out that all the symptoms I had been mentioning until then were related to pre-eclampsia, except for the blood pressure number.

My baby had been taken to NICU because his glucose was not going up when fed, so I couldn't see him until I was able to stand and go to NICU myself.

When we got there, my heart broke in pieces when I saw my baby. He had several pricked wounds on his soles, and to our anger, he had been given a dummy. When we asked the nurse about it, she replied in a very annoyed attitude that maybe it was because we hadn't signed the papers against the dummy, we obviously didn't even have this mentioned, so my husband asked her if she had even checked said paper, to which she finally said she hadn't, so they'd just give a dummy to every baby until told otherwise. My baby looked so scared when anyone approached him, because he'd just be touched to be fed, changed or pricked for the glucose, we asked to have them check the last and pass him onto special care, where I'd be able to breastfeed properly. In special care, they treated him heaps better, and we could see the difference every breast feed.

I couldn't be discharged yet, because my blood pressure was still playing up, so when we were told there were not enough cribs for babies, if we could have my baby in my room, the obs/gyn said they'd check what they could do. A couple of hours later I was told we could bring our baby down. And almost at the same time, my husband was told all the papers were signed to send my baby to Calvary Hospital, and that he was ready to go.

After a conversation with my midwife and the obs/gyn, they told me that my options were to let baby go to Calvary and stay in Canberra Hospital, or discharge myself. So, I did.

We arrived at Calvary and I was patronized over and over again being told I didn't need a bed because I was DISCHARGED, to which I would repeat that I had to sign that, but I wasn't meant to be discharged, but it was only when a lady (she didn't seem a nurse, nor midwife) that was working nearby came to us and asked me to explain it to her in my own language ( ), she was able to guide us, get an armchair for me to feed my baby and then explained to the other nurses that I needed to use the visitor's room, that they stopped using me like they did.

In this visitor's room, I had another high blood pressure episode, but since no one was meant to be checking on me, we had to call the same lady again, and she was also able to get me admitted in a room in the obs/gyn ward and have my baby with me until I was finally rightfully discharged.

Again, sorry for the long submission.

Thanks