



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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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SUBMISSION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, AGEING AND COMMUNITY CARE - INQUIRY INTO MATERNITY SERVICES IN THE ACT

Introduction

ACT Health is pleased to provide a written submission to the Committee. This Submission outlines the range of activity in publicly-funded maternity services in the ACT including those provided at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC), Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB) and in the community setting. Additionally, the Submission describes the range of maternity education, specialist and support services both provided and funded by the ACT Government.

The ACT Government continues to make maternity services in the ACT a priority. Over the next three years the ACT Government has committed \$65.5 million to continue the expansion of the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC) to provide additional capacity and support for maternity and paediatric services.

On 18 September 2018 the Standing Committee on Health, Ageing and Community Services (the Committee) announced an Inquiry into Maternity Services in the ACT. The Committee called for submissions and set out the Terms of Reference as follows:

- (a) Models of care for all maternity services offered at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children (CHWC) and Calvary Public Hospital Bruce (CPHB), including, but not limited to, the Birth Centre, the Canberra Midwifery Program, and the Homebirth Trial and whether there are any gaps in care;
- (b) Provision of private maternity services including centre and non-centre services;
- (c) Management of patient flow, including, but not limited to, wait lists, booking services, and capacity constraints;
- (d) Management of patient birthing preferences, including, but not limited to, professional advice offered to patients, and the practices associated with birthing emergencies;
- (e) Interaction between the CHWC and CPHB with other service areas, including, but not limited to, emergency departments, and operating theatres;
- (f) The efficiency and efficacy of maternity services;
- (g) The impact on maternity services on regional participants;
- (h) Patient satisfaction with the services;
- (i) The impact on staff including, but not limited to, rostering policies and practices, staff-to-patient ratios, optimum staffing levels, and skills mix;
- (j) The impact of technological advances and innovations;
- (k) Relevant experiences and learnings from other jurisdictions; and
- (l) Any related matters.

For the information of the Committee, the following pages set out the models of care available through the ACT's public maternity services.

Maternity Services in ACT Public Hospitals

Maternity services at both CHWC and CPHB are provided by a multidisciplinary team including obstetricians, neonatologists, midwives, nurses and allied health professionals. All members of both maternity teams work in partnership with women and each other to provide the highest standard of, and access to, maternity care. The care at CHWC and CPHB Maternity Services is woman-centred, providing care that is respectful and responsive to individual patient preferences and needs, ensuring that the woman's values guide all clinical decisions.

Throughout the antenatal period, women are provided with evidence-based information to support them to make informed choices about their birthing preferences. Care provided is culturally sensitive, evidence-based and individualised to meet each woman's unique needs.

Centenary Hospital for Women and Children

Maternity care is provided to women during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period. The aim of publicly-funded maternity care is the provision of consistently high-quality, evidence-based maternity care for mothers and babies. Maternity care includes confirmation of pregnancy, antenatal care, education, pregnancy/maternity assessment, foetal medicine, intrapartum and postnatal care in a range of environments.

CHWC provides all levels of maternity care, including complex care for women with serious obstetric and foetal conditions requiring high-level multidisciplinary care. As a tertiary referral service it supports and links with the surrounding lower level maternity services regarding consultation, referral and transfer of high risk women/babies. A full range of birthing options are provided for all women regardless of gestational age or clinical risk. The CHWC also provides valuable training experience for medical and midwifery staff.

Models of Maternity Care

General Practitioner (GP) Shared Care

Women may choose to have their GP as their primary care giver during their pregnancy. In this model, care is provided by both the GP and CHWC. Dependent on whether the woman has pregnancy related risk factors, hospital care will be with a midwife or an obstetrician.

Continuity of midwifery care

The Canberra Midwifery Program (CMP) and Continuity at The Canberra Hospital (CaTCH) offer a named midwife as their primary care giver across the antenatal, birth and postnatal period. CMP provides care for women with no identified risk factors seeking a low intervention approach to birthing. Women in CMP who are in the Publically Funded Homebirth Trial may birth at home, in the Birth Centre or Birth Suite. CaTCH provides care for low and mixed risk women. Women in CaTCH birth in the Birth Centre or the Birth Suite.

The Publicly Funded Homebirth Trial is currently being undertaken within the CMP. This program has clinical and geographical criteria.

Women may also have antenatal care provided by a midwife in the maternity clinics.

All of these women have access to medical care as required.

Private midwifery led care

Women have the option of choosing a private midwife under the ACT Health Endorsed Midwives Framework. Under the Framework, Privately Practicing Midwives can provide care to women who either want or need to birth at hospital rather than at home. The Framework also allows the Privately Practicing Midwife to consult with the medical team at CHWC.

Obstetrician led care

Women who have identified risk factors associated with their pregnancy will be offered care provided by the obstetric team. During the antenatal period, care will be managed either through the Foetal Medicine Unit (FMU) or the obstetric clinic. Women then attend the Birth Suite supported by a team of medical staff and midwives.

Maternity Care Units

Maternity Assessment Unit

Women with problems or concerns during pregnancy can seek care through the Maternity Assessment Unit (MAU) at CHWC. This service enables women to bypass the emergency department and present directly to the MAU for assessment and care. They are also able to access this service for early labour assessment. The service operates extended hours until 8pm Monday to Friday and out of hours an assessment service is available by contacting the birth suite.

Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit

Women who are experiencing miscarriage or have concerns in early pregnancy are able to access this service via referral from the emergency department or their GP.

Postnatal care

Women who are well after having their baby and have had a normal labour and birth without complications, may choose to go home soon after the birth. Women who have had a caesarean section birth, or who otherwise require a longer stay, will be admitted to the postnatal ward. After leaving the CHWC, postnatal women receive home visits from domiciliary midwives through the Midcall program, and also have access to information and advice from the Maternal and Child Health Service (MACH).

Postnatal care within continuity programs is provided by the named midwife.

Neonatal Intensive Care/Special Care

Newborn babies requiring additional care will be admitted to either the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or Special Care Nursery (SCN).

Calvary Public Hospital Bruce

Maternity care at CPHB is predominantly provided by midwives using family centred models of care. This includes the antenatal clinic, parent education program, birth suite, maternity ward, special care nursery and Midcall home visiting program. CPHB offers obstetrician-led (as required), midwife-led (continuity of care) and GP shared care models of maternity care. All postnatal women are referred to the MACH service at time of discharge.

The maternity ward has recently undergone a complete refurbishment resulting in a more contemporary environment for women and their families. There is now more single bed accommodation, day beds for partners to stay, and a family friendly sitting room. The refurbishment has addressed women's concerns about the dated facilities and environment prior to the upgrade.

CPHB provides maternity services for women who are 34 weeks gestation or over and/or with no or acceptable risk factors. Women requiring a higher level of care for themselves or the baby, are referred to CHWC.

The CPHB SCN works in collaboration with the SCN at CHWC to facilitate transfers and admissions of babies requiring varying levels of care. In addition, the Neonatal Emergency Transport Service (NETS) is contacted when a baby needs, or is at risk of needing, intensive care and requires transfer to the CHWC.

Summary of Maternity Care Options Across CHWC and CPHB

Care options	CHWC	CPHB
General practitioner shared care	✓	✓
Continuity of midwifery care	✓	✓
Private midwifery led care	✓	✓
Obstetrician led care	✓	✓
Maternity assessment unit	✓	✓
Early pregnancy assessment unit	✓	✓
Postnatal care	✓	✓
Low and acceptable risk factor pregnancies	✓	✓
Neonatal special care	✓	✓
Neonatal intensive care	✓	X
High risk factor pregnancies	✓	X

Community Based Services

The Maternal and Child Health (MACH) Service

The MACH service supports parents with information and health advice. The Service is provided by registered nurses who hold additional qualifications in maternal, child and family health. MACH provides a range of services to parents of newborns through to toddlers. This includes drop-in clinics, booked appointments, child health checks, new parents groups, newborn groups, and sleep and settling groups.

CCCaes@Canberra College

CCCaes@Canberra College is a program for pregnant and parenting students from the ACT and surrounding districts. The program links into a range of maternity and early childhood services offered by Canberra Health Services and the Community Services Directorate.

Karinya House Home for Mothers & Babies

Karinya House is a community based organisation providing supported accommodation, transitional housing and outreach services for women who are pregnant, or parenting newborn babies and are without appropriate support and accommodation. The service links into a range of maternity and newborn services offered by Canberra Health Services and the Community Services Directorate.

Other community based services

The ACT Health Directorate and Canberra Health Services collaborate with non-government organisations (NGO) to deliver additional services to women and their families in the antenatal period, in the pre and postnatal period. Key community based services include:

Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA)

The ABA ACT and Southern NSW is funded to provide counselling, information, education and support; breastfeeding education sessions for ACT community organisations, primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions; breastfeeding classes for prospective and new parents; and community displays.

Queen Elizabeth II Family Centre (QEII)

QEII provides residential care for families with children up to three years of age who are experiencing health and/or behavioural difficulties. This includes issues such as complex lactation and other feeding problems, unsettled baby, parents with physical or intellectual disabilities, and primary carer support.

Red nose saving little lives

'Red nose saving little lives' (formerly SIDS & Kids) provides information and support to parents through education sessions and workshops for parents on reducing the risks related to the sudden and unexpected death of a newborn or child.

Women and Newborn Community Support Program

Community Options provides the Women and Newborn Community Support Program which provides short term community-based services for women who do not need hospital care, but require support services in their own home and who may be socially isolated.

Post and Ante Natal Depression Support and Information (PANDSI)

PANDSI provides support services for women experiencing post and antenatal depression and their families through the provision of an assessment and referral service appropriate to the needs of the woman and her family.

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (WNAHCS)

WNAHCS provides a range of services to pregnant women and their newborns, including the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program, smoking cessation and alcohol minimisation programs. The Midwifery Access Program links to mainstream maternity services in the ACT and surrounds. A Mums and Bubs Group provides information and support for new mothers.

Demand for Maternity services in the ACT

Maternity services at CHWC have experienced consistently high demand in recent years. Canberra families have been attracted to the modern facilities, in particular the single room accommodation, and more women are requiring access to the tertiary level care available at CHWC.

Also impacting on demand were the 2010 changes to the Medicare Safety Net. These resulted in increased out of pocket expenses for private maternity patients, with a resulting increase in demand for public hospital maternity services. Birthing events at CHWC have significantly increased, from 2,743 in 2010-11 to 3,561 in 2016-17, an annual growth rate of 4.5 per cent.

The table below shows the distribution of births across maternity services in the ACT, by month for 2017.

Month of birth	Canberra Hospital	Calvary Bruce Public	Calvary John James	Calvary Bruce Private	Private Homebirth	ACT
January	334	155	89	4	0	582
February	289	123	78	4	0	494
March	318	140	84	6	1	549
April	291	129	73	2	0	495
May	308	133	82	5	0	528
June	288	133	90	6	1	518
July	306	128	86	1	1	522
August	325	148	64	2	0	539
September	351	133	57	0	0	541
October	325	133	97	2	0	557
November	315	125	64	4	1	509
December	290	99	72	2	0	463
Total	3740	1579	936	38	4	6297
Monthly average	311.7	131.6	78	3.2	0.3	524.8

CPHB Maternity Unit can provide care for up to 1,760 birthing women per year. Calvary expects to meet these numbers with the recent refurbishment of the maternity ward which includes an increase in the number of single bed rooms. Since 2015 CPHB has had a steady decline in birthing numbers which can be attributed to the opening of CHWC and fewer single bed rooms at CPHB.

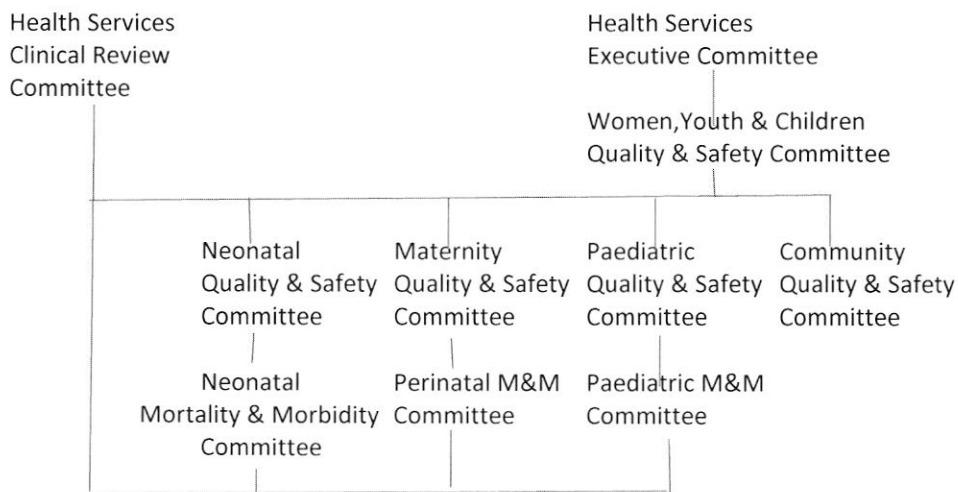
Quality and Safety

Clinical Governance

Quality and safety of care at CHWC is governed through a comprehensive clinical governance system involving the Division of Women Youth and Children Quality and Safety Committee and the Maternity Quality and Safety Committee. Through the clinical governance framework (outlined below) the quality and safety of clinical services is monitored and reported, together with case review through the Mortality & Morbidity Committees. There are multiple data sources utilised, including a range of clinical outcome indicators as well as incident reporting.

Incident reporting is encouraged and follows the Canberra Health Services’ Incident Management Policy. High Risk incidents are automatically notified to senior management within CHWC for appropriate action and follow up, including review by the Clinical Review Committee. Implementation of recommendations arising from the Clinical Review Committee and Mortality & Morbidity meetings are monitored.

**Women, Youth and Children Division
Clinical Governance Structure**



CPHB Maternity Unit reviews all adverse clinical events via the CPHB Maternal, Perinatal and Gynaecological Clinical Review Committee (MPGCRC). Review outcomes are disseminated to the relevant areas to enable development and implementation of new procedures, pathways and quality improvement activities. The role of the MPGCRC is to seek opportunities to enhance clinical outcomes, identify opportunities for cross specialty enhancement and to ensure safe, effective patient care within Women’s and Infants’ Services at CPHB.

Policy and Procedures

Care is provided in line with best practice with regular review of policies and procedures which are available electronically to all staff. At CWCH, the review process is overseen by the Quality and Safety Unit and monitored through the Quality and Safety Committee structure outlined above. At CPHB, the MPGCRC has this role. At both hospitals, staff training programs align with current policies, and this training is also reviewed regularly.

Clinical Indicators

The maternity services at CHWC and CPHB are members of Women's Healthcare Australasia (WHA), a peak association for women's health services across Australia and New Zealand. WHA produce an annual clinical outcome benchmarking report which enables both hospitals to benchmark their services against peer level maternity facilities using a range of clinical outcome indicators. These reports enable identification of areas for improvement.

CHWC has completed a project addressing the incidence of significant perineal trauma. The perineal trauma project involved the development and implementation of targeted education for midwives and medical practitioners, and resulted in a significant decrease in incidence to below the national average. The education package has subsequently been used by other jurisdictions. CHWC have recently commenced a postpartum haemorrhage project to reduce incidences.

Partnerships with other organisations

CHWC has positive and proactive relationships with other maternity service providers in the region and across NSW. In 2011, the Division of Women, Youth and Children established the ACT and Region Maternity Services Network to provide a discussion forum and to provide strategic input to the implementation of maternity care in the region.

Senior executives from Canberra Health Services meet regularly with their counterparts at CPHB, and a joint working group was established to develop the Maternity Access Strategy.

As noted above, CHWC and CPHB are members of Women's Healthcare Australasia and participate in benchmarking programs, special interest groups and national forums.

Consumer feedback and complaints process

Canberra Health Services' Consumer Feedback and Engagement Team meets regularly with senior executives in the Women, Youth and Children Division, with similar arrangements in place at CPHB. All feedback is reviewed and responded to appropriately. Where a complaint is received, both maternity units provide women and their families the opportunity to meet with senior staff to discuss their concerns.

- In 2016-17 and 2017-18, maternity services at CHWC received 56 consumer feedback complaints, 186 consumer compliments, and during this period had 7154 births.
- In 2015-18, maternity services at CPHB received 35 consumer feedback complaints and 714 compliments.

Research Initiatives

Clinicians at CHWC participate in several research projects, some of which are funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Multicentre research projects directly related to maternity care include the My Baby's Movement Trial which has recruited over 2000 women in Canberra.

A forthcoming project is "The Whole Nine Months", led by the Preterm Birth Alliance. This is a national initiative to screen all pregnant women to assess the risk of preterm birth. Already underway in Western Australia, this project has been credited with a reduction of 8 per cent in preterm births. The preterm birth rate in the ACT is around 7% per year (or about 350 birth events) and a possible reduction by 6-7% (or 35 birth events) would bring about significant benefits for families and the health system. The project is anticipated to begin in the ACT early in 2019.

Major Projects

Refurbishment of Calvary Public Hospital maternity services

In early 2018 the ACT Government committed \$2.6 million to Calvary Public Hospital to refurbish the maternity ward. The upgrade provided increased access to single bed rooms and facilities for partners to stay overnight, a new family lounge room, contemporary birth suite rooms, and an education room for staff.

ACT Public Maternity Access Strategy

ACT Health and Canberra Health Services are in the final stages of developing the ACT Public Maternity Access Strategy after extensive stakeholder consultation led by the Women's Centre for Health Matters throughout 2018.

The ACT Public Maternity Access Strategy will take a Territory-wide approach to managing demand and informing women about birthing choices in a community setting close to their home. The Strategy will also provide the appropriate referral pathway to meet their pregnancy, birthing and postnatal needs.

The Strategy seeks to create a streamlined 'one public maternity system' in the ACT, which supports:

- care provided in the community, close to the mother's home;
- continuity of care from maternity to maternal child health services with seamless clinical handover for care in the community until their child is ready for school;
- early intervention for physical and emotional health and wellbeing;
- early recognition through education and intervention of family violence; and
- Increase health outcomes for women, babies and their families through increasing community family support.

The ACT Public Maternity Access Strategy is seeking to address the demand on both public hospitals of normal to medium health care needs of women which will equalise the low to medium risk care across Canberra's two public maternity hospitals. This will increase the capacity at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children to be able to respond to the local and regional high risk or emergency maternity care requirement of the community.

ACT Health and Canberra Health Services will consult the community further in 2019 in order to implement the Strategy in 2019.

Maternity Services Workforce

Staffing profile

Maternity services at both CHWC and CPHB are provided by a multidisciplinary team including obstetricians, neonatologists, midwives, nurses and allied health professionals. Access to specific expertise is available to all women dependent on need. Many women also meet anaesthetists during their birthing experiences.

Midwives at both CHWC and CPHB adhere to the Australian College of Midwives' Guidelines for Consultation and Referral to inform clinical decision-making.

The ACT Health Directorate acknowledges the concerns raised earlier this year by some staff at CHWC. Canberra Health Services has been working with staff and their representatives to ensure they are supported and their concerns are addressed appropriately. Canberra Health Services investigates all issues raised by staff, be that a clinical issue, a safety concern or complaints about inappropriate behaviour. Canberra Health Services recognises that all staff at CHWC are caring people who want to provide the very best care for women and their families.

Staffing levels at both hospitals take account of patient acuity and caseloads. Staff are able to report concerns related to workload through the incident management system as well as escalating to their line managers. Midwifery staff at both sites are also able to report concerns to the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation ACT Branch, which provides details to Canberra Health Services for investigation. Three such reports have been received from staff at CHWC in the past 12 months, each of which were investigated and appropriate action taken to address the issues identified.

Staff orientation and training

New staff at both CHWC and CPHB are provided hospital, divisional and clinical area orientation. All staff are expected and supported to complete a range of mandatory continuing professional development activities each year. There are other education and competency based assessment programs that are targeted towards particular clinical areas.

Both CHWC and CPHB are committed to supporting student and new graduate midwives. Both services have good relationships with local universities including University of Canberra and Charles Sturt University to ensure that students access supported placements in relevant clinical areas.

The Canberra Hospital, including CHWC, and CHPB are accredited by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology to provide specialist medical training, including advanced training for general practitioners.

Summary

The ACT's public hospital system is focussed on ensuring high quality clinically-appropriate care.