

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric](#)
Subject: Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Health Services in Tasmani
Date: Saturday, 14 September 2024 12:08:43 PM

Dear Secretary,

I am writing to the Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Health Services in Tasmania, because I need to share my story to support other mums

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in the greater Devonport area. I have two children, twins who were born at 33 + 5 weeks gestation. They are currently 4 months old, 2.5 months corrected. I would like to address the trauma and/or disrespectful care that I experienced in my pregnancy, labour, birth and post-partum here in Tasmania.

PREGNANCY

Early in my pregnancy, no one prepared me for premature birth and no one took me seriously when I had concerns. Seeing my GP, I was dismissed as 'first and sensitive pregnancy' - I had only been feeling unwell but worried about the impact on the twins (being a first time mum) as I hadn't been well at all leading up to that particular appointment. Getting closer to birth (which we didn't know it would obviously be so early), I kept having to ask for a birth plan and where to birth etc because I was aware of the risk I had going early. Seeing as I was "high risk", I thankfully got extra appointments but no one treated me high risk or had any concern/advice for me. It was the week I went into premature labour, an OB allowed me to begin a plan by booking in my c section (which I was told I didn't have a choice in how I birthed at the start by another OB).

LABOUR/BIRTH

In the early stages of my labour I couldn't fault the north west regional hospital nor Launceston and I'm very thankful that they took me seriously when I pushed for a C-section. I knew what I wanted but did feel over whelmed and went in to shock on the table when realising all the trauma I had been through in the previous 48 hours from being transported between hospitals and not knowing what was going to happen. My babies were taken away for care once born (which was a ok as they were getting looked after) but I wish more information was given to me in the next three weeks following about how to prepare for life with premature babies as nothing prepares you for this in your antenatal appointments.

When staying in the hospital for the week post birth as a patient, I would often miss doctors as they wouldn't tell me they were coming (I was only in the NICU down the hall) but a lot of my follow up was missed as the nurses didn't communicate to the doctors to come find me. The NICU also never told me things when I was staying in the hospital (no communication between the two considering they're on the same floor).

POST-PARTUM

I was ignored/dismissed when pushing for support and basic health checks with my twins as they have had quite a few instances for medical intervention.

My son, failing to thrive for example... through child health (life savers), we had noticed

sub optimal weight gain so after a few times of him being sick repeatedly, I presented to the NWRH emergency department with concerns of his weight and not being able to feed properly. He was checked over by nurses and the ED doctor but the paed's didn't want to see him and we were sent home. Knowing what I know now I wish I had of gotten more answers but as a first time mum you trust the system. After a couple more weeks, we noticed some tongue restrictions but due to more sub optimal gain, were referred to the emergency paediatric clinic (which they had no space) so we went to the emergency department. This time, we're taken seriously as you could see his ribs. We didn't leave for a week, sent home whilst he still wasn't well... so ended up back after 24 hours. With his diagnosis still up in the air (we went in July 2024) due to lack of specialists accessible in Tasmania and playing the waiting game along with his age... we still have no idea. The communication with the hospital, specialists and child health are appalling as no one knows what's going on and relies on me to share all the information.

My children have also had many feeding issues however when I raise them as a mother, I'm dismissed as the paediatric team have told me "they don't believe in tongue restrictions" and originally passed off by a speech pathologists, follow ups I have made myself out of the hospital have confirmed they do, needing intervention to help them. Why is it so hard to get basic care for your child? That's an issue:

SOLUTIONS

The recommendations that I have are:

Easier and wider access to midwife led continuity of care models

More specialists in Tasmania, especially the north

Teams that work closer together to aim for better outcomes collectively

A better communication system

- Access to a known midwife regardless if high risk or not
- Access to unbiased evidence based information
- Mandatory trauma-informed training for clinicians
- More funding for post-partum care, such as physio, social worker, lactation support
- Improved support mothers with premature babies and multiples

Kind regards,



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