

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric](#)
Subject: Re: Select Committee on Reproductive , Maternal and Paediatric Health Services
Date: Saturday, 14 September 2024 6:44:04 AM

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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.

My name is [REDACTED] I live in the Hobart area. I have one child, they are 4 years old. I would like to address the trauma and lack of duty of care that I experienced in my labour/birth and post-partum here in Tasmania.

PREGNANCY

In my pregnancy, no one told me that I could say no to all interventions related to my pregnancy, labour and birth.

I was given a stretch and sweep when I didn't give consent. I didn't understand what the feeling was or what the doctor at PAC was doing at the time to me until I read more about it after the fact because I was in so much pain which made me wonder "did she actually give me a stretch and sweep?". My labour didn't eventuate for over 7 days. This made me feel invaded, assaulted and deceived.

No one told me I didn't have to take the glucose test. It would have saved me from vomiting within the first 30 mins of ingestion, with blood results taken earlier than the slotted 1 hr time. I felt disappointed and undermined that I was made to do something I didn't need to because I knew my body best.

LABOUR

I had no idea I could have chosen to refuse cervical examinations, and any hands compressing my belly.

I felt scared when the doctor had her hand inside my cervix whilst I was contracting and then she wanted her colleague doctor to push down on my belly to release excess amniotic fluid. I wasn't informed of this process prior to her attempting to apply this technique, before my midwife asked to stop as she could see I was so distressed I couldn't verbally communicate in the moment, as I was physically trying to move away from the doctor.

I felt pressured to accept this process of intervention as her hand was inside me and there was no information about the procedure prior nor to give my consent to the doctor before the technique was being applied.

I had this procedure done to me, without my informed consent. This made me feel violated, distressed and trapped.

POST-PARTUM

My experience in labour and birth meant that my experience of PTSD from the labour and birth affected my mental well-being, my relationships to the those around me were strained due to PTSD causing further isolation and ruptured relationships, my ability to return to work was delayed by 2.5 years and to enjoy my life. I had to spend the little money I had to see a psychologist to validate that my experience was violating. I also haven't had another child as I'd hope to as I was still recovering from PTSD. Only 4.5 years later am I able to consider trying for another child, which won't be possible for another year or so due to finance.

I have not been able to make a complaint to the hospital because I have been so impacted, and telling my story re-triggers my experience.

SOLUTIONS

The recommendations that I have are:

- Easier and wider access to midwife led continuity of care models
- Access to a known midwife
- Access to publicly funded homebirth, birth centre or a birthing on country program
- Access to unbiased evidence based information
- Legislation on informed consent
- Mandatory trauma-informed training for clinicians
- More funding for post-partum care, such as physio, social worker, lactation support
- Improved support for early pregnancy loss

Kind regards,

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