



Dear Barbara Vernon (Health and Community Services Committee)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013 presented by Mrs Miller in which she proposed that persons' in charge of child care services such as kinder gardens and pre-schools, be given the option to refuse entry to children who are not fully immunised. This bill allows for certified exemptions on medical grounds (Miller 2013).

The Queensland branch of the Australian College of Midwives represents midwives in Queensland and provides guidance and support on midwifery issues.

The Australian College of Midwives Queensland's (ACMQ) response to this action is based on the professions' philosophy; Midwifery is informed by scientific evidence, by collective and individual experience and intuition. The scientific evidence used to argue for parents to vaccinate their children says immunisation provides protection against life threatening and debilitating illnesses; some of which have been eradicated in some countries such as small pox and measles. However these diseases are making a come-back due to the availability of hosts who have not acquired immunity through innate (natural) or adaptive (acquired) immunity. Queensland is reported to have the lowest rate of compliance with the national immunisation schedule with 70,000 infants not fully immunised at one year and a figure of fewer than 85% of 5 year old fully vaccinated in Brisbane (National Health Performance Authority, 2013). These statistics are based on children receiving all recommended vaccinations and do not differentiate between children who have had partial compliance with the schedule or total non-compliance and so must be viewed with caution.

The ACMQ supports women's rights to choice. It recognises every woman's' responsibility to make informed decisions for herself, her baby and her family with assistance, when requested, from health professionals (ACM 2004). As midwives the ACMQ will advise its members to provide women with the information and resources to enable them to make an informed choice about vaccination. Families have the right to choose full, partial or non-compliance with the vaccination schedule. This Act has the potential to lead to the exclusion of partially vaccinated children and detrimental consequences on working families or those that need daily respite care.

On behalf of the ACMQ Executive



References

ACM 2004 <http://www.midwives.org.au/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=MIDW/ccms.r?pageid=10019> (accessed 19.06.13)

National Health Performance Authority 2013, Health Communities: Immunisation rates for children 2011-2012, NHPA, Sydney. www.nhpa.gov.au (accessed 17.06.13)

The Conversation <http://theconversation.com/science-and-fear-a-review-of-vaccination-documentary-jabbed-14291> (accessed 18.06.13)

The Public Health (Exclusion of Unvaccinated Children from Child Care) Amendment Bill 2013
<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-committees/HCSC/inquiries/current-inquiries/PHunvaccinatedchildren>