



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION

MEDIA RELEASE

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Midwifery-led care model on Central Coast seeking more support, not less

Midwives involved in the Midwifery Group Practice service operating across the Central Coast Local Health District say they were shocked and saddened to hear two full-time positions will be cut from the midwifery-led service, without any consultation.

Local members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) learned of the planned staffing reallocation when Central Coast LHD Chief Executive, Dr Andrew Montague, confirmed the decision on ABC Central Coast radio earlier this week.

NSWNMA Assistant General Secretary, Judith Kiejda, said it was a disappointing way for the midwives to find out there would be a staffing change to the Midwifery Group Practice service, which is highly sought after among low-risk pregnant mothers in the local area.

"Unfortunately, we're seeing a trend emerge with Central Coast LHD and a lack of appropriate consultation with our members, or our Association directly," said Ms Kiejda.

"Under the nurses' and midwives' State Award, the LHD is required to consult with us regarding any changes to staffing or service delivery. There's also a dedicated Agreement that specifically looks after the midwives involved in the local Midwifery Group Practice service.

"These midwives are extremely dedicated and highly experienced professionals. They offer midwifery-led continuity of care to almost one-third of the births planned on the Central Coast.

"According to our members, approximately 913 of the 3200 local births are delivered by midwives from the Gosford and Wyong Midwifery Group Practice services.

"Women's satisfaction with the service is well documented. In fact, there are waiting lists of women seeking care from the Gosford and Wyong midwifery-led teams. Midwives linked to the service are generally booked out quickly, as midwifery staffing levels have not met local demand.

"It's extremely disingenuous of the LHD Chief Executive to suggest two full-time positions should be reallocated to the hospital maternity services because management left those positions vacant for an extended period of time.

"We're told the midwifery-led positions are highly desirable and provide excellent job satisfaction for the midwives involved, as well as high retention, despite the challenges of being on call.

"This cut to staffing and reduction of the midwifery-led service will not only increase the workload of all the remaining Group Practice midwives, it means 100 women on the Coast will be unable to access this standard of care."

The NSWNMA confirmed it was urgently seeking consultation on the planned staff reallocations from the LHD.

Members of the Wyong and Gosford Hospital branches were also contacting local Members of Parliament to highlight their concerns.



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