



FIRST BABY CAMPAIGN

A GLOBAL ISSUE LOCAL ACTION

SAFE MOTHERHOOD FOR ALL: AN URGENT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

Across the globe maternal health is in crisis. At Dili General Hospital Timor-Leste, a child a day dies a preventable death. Here at home, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women die in childbirth at three times the national average and are twice as likely to lose their babies in birth. Throughout Australia, rates of postnatal depression are on the rise.

This is an issue not just for the developing world but a growing local crisis. Statistical data and case reports from wealthy *and* impoverished nations paint an increasingly disturbing picture. **In maternity care systems worldwide the safety of mothers and babies is being compromised, hourly, daily, routinely.**

This crisis grows in the face of policy decisions that consistently direct resources away from maternal and child health. But fixing it is possible. What is needed is **greater investment in maternal care – more resources, and more informed policies that take account of the social determinants of maternal health –** the factors we now know most influence maternal and child health outcomes.

WHY FIRST BABY?

The first pregnancy and birth set the tone for subsequent births and each woman's childrearing experience. New mothers who receive adequate support and who are treated with care and dignity have the tools to raise healthy babies.

The First Baby Campaign calls for social policies that reflect safe motherhood as a core value of our society. This means working together to address the social determinants of safe motherhood – poverty, social exclusion; shortcomings in safeguarding early childhood development; unsafe relationships; unsafe employment conditions, and a lack of access to quality education and health care.

THE FIRST BABY CAMPAIGN AIMS TO:

- **Ensure that safe motherhood is a core value of our society**
- **Educate the community, health professionals and mothers about respectful maternity care**
- **Influence public policy to address the social determinants of safe motherhood**
- **Achieve a safe transition to motherhood for women, their first babies, families and communities.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- a) 'like' us on Facebook - First Baby Campaign
- b) organise a mothers' group morning tea or similar event to raise money for SFMA's advocacy work
- c) share your story with our growing network via the SFMA website
- d) sign up to the Universal Rights of Childbearing Women by emailing info@safemotherhoodforall.org.au
- e) email or write to your local member calling for them to recognise this issue and act accordingly by allocating more resources to maternal and child health
- f) **If your maternal care experience was unacceptable, lodge a formal complaint to the Health Services Commission**

Tell us what you're doing –
mail to: info@safemotherhoodforall.org.au

*When a woman becomes a mother it is a momentous and life-changing event. **As a community we need to support all women, and what better time to do this than upon the birth of her first baby?** The First Baby Campaign calls on you to take this opportunity to love, support and share in the miracle that is a new mother and her new baby. **We all have a role to play whether it be a congratulating hug, preparing a meal or lobbying the government for more adequate resources for safe motherhood - what role will you play?***

Dimity Fifer Chair Safe Motherhood for All

WHO WE ARE

Safe Motherhood for All is a group of committed people bound together by a common goal: to ensure that pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood are safe for all women and children, in Australia, our region and in every country around the world. Safe Motherhood for All is part of the global White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood.

The White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood is a grassroots movement that builds alliances, strengthens capacity, influences policies, harnesses resources and inspires action to save the lives of women and newborns around the world.

For more informations visit:
www.safemotherhoodforall.org.au

RESPECTFUL MATERNITY CARE

THE UNIVERSAL RIGHTS OF CHILDBEARING WOMEN

Safe Motherhood is more than the prevention of death and disability. It is respect for every woman's humanity, feelings, choices, and preferences. In seeking and receiving maternity care before, during and after childbirth:

1 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM HARM AND ILL TREATMENT

2 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION, INFORMED CONSENT AND REFUSAL, AND RESPECT FOR HER CHOICES AND PREFERENCES, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO HER CHOICE OF COMPANIONSHIP DURING MATERNITY CARE

3 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

4 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

5 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO EQUALITY, FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, AND EQUITABLE CARE

6 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO HEALTHCARE AND TO THE HIGHEST ATTAINABLE LEVEL OF HEALTH

7 EVERY WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO LIBERTY, AUTONOMY, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND FREEDOM FROM COERCION

Disrespect and abuse during maternity care are a violation of women's basic human rights.