

Submission
No 623

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 7 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

At 8 weeks I was accepted into the [REDACTED] hospital MGP. The midwife informed me that it was likely that I had been accepted into the program on the premise of anxiety disorder I had previously dealt with.

At 16 weeks I had some bleeding I called the midwife, and she was reserved but mentioned I could go to emergency being a weekend and get it checked out. Emergency was flooded with people. After waiting for hours, the doctor came to myself and another woman and said "you'll have to decide because the imaging specialist needs to go home for the day". So I decided I would wait until the following day to get it checked, and the woman who had an infected gall bladder would access the imaging services.

At 26 weeks, my assigned midwife contacted me, at work in a heightened state saying that my iron was low. This felt so out of the blue after so many blood tests, then none. The midwife was extremely heightened saying things like "you're going to haemorrhage" and "you won't be able to homebirth". I was at work and felt I had to talk my midwife down. This led to days of distress, anxiety, confusion for me and my partner. Until we contacted a private midwife. Luckily this midwife had availability.

I was unhappy with my MGP experience, however, I could tell that they were incredibly under resourced. And that there was a strong conflict between midwife and hospital policy.

At my 20 week scan my placenta was sitting at 2.6mm. [REDACTED] hospital has an in house policy of 3mm. So when at 37 weeks I went to the birth suit for low foetal movement, the doctor tried to force me to get another scan, simply because of the placenta. At this point he made it unclear if our baby was okay, or if he wanted me to get another scan because of the FHR or the placenta, and he manipulated the situation which felt like a refusal to let me leave the hospital without the referral. They called my private midwife without my consent and accused her of malpractice. When this occurred I sat in the chair for 4 hours explained why I was there to 4 different midwives. It ended with the doctor standing over me telling me I was going to haemorrhage when I gave birth and that I would not be able to give birth naturally. My partner had to defend me, and when he asked questions the doctor was sleepy, rude and insinuated that we were not thinking about what was best for our baby.

While these events are notably mild compared to other birthing people in our community, they were absolutely distressing and still are. The fact that pregnant women are treated with such hypocrisy when trying to make the most educated, informed and healthiest decision of their lives is traumatising.

Contrary to the staff at [REDACTED] hospital belief's, my birth, a first birth, was four hours, natural delivery with no haemorrhage! My beautiful baby was born in my home with my partner and my midwife present. Despite everyone telling me I was making the most unsafe choice, my baby was born in the safest way possible. The care that I received in the first 6 weeks was amazing, thoughtful tailored and calm. It was the best start to parenthood anyone could ask for! Anyone birthing should have access to this care. It is essential for the wellbeing of babies and birthing people.