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Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Breastfeeding

My career in the health care industry (covering both orthodox and complementary arenas) has spanned almost 40 years. I have an Honours Degree in Pharmacy and a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Nutrition. For the last 20 years I have worked to improve women's fertility and reproductive health by natural means. I am the co-author of the international best-selling series

- o *The Natural Way to Better Babies – Preconception Healthcare for Prospective Parents*
- o *The Natural Way to a Better Pregnancy*
- o *The Natural Way to Better Birth & Bonding*
- o *The Natural Way to Better Breastfeeding.*

Too often these days, when conception, pregnancy and birth are medically managed events, the actual desire to breastfeed is not only significantly reduced, but the likelihood of a successful and long term breastfeeding relationship is seriously compromised. The main focus of my own work is ensuring the physical and emotional health of both prospective parents long before they conceive a child, thus ensuring the foundation for:

- o Optimal fertility
- o Healthy, full-term pregnancy
- o Short, straightforward labour and
- o Successful breastfeeding

Therefore I applaud any initiative that will ensure the following:

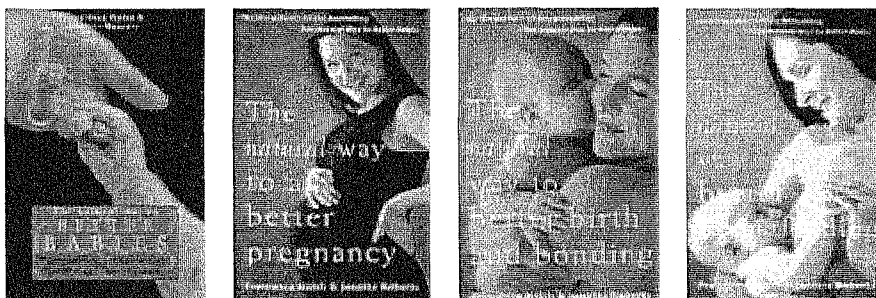
- o Appropriate education on the ease, simplicity and benefits of breastfeeding (start in schools)

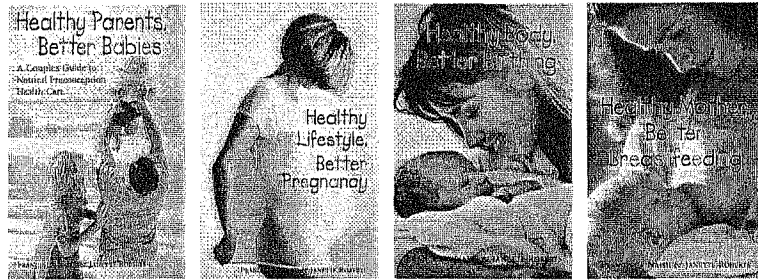
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- Continuing, easily accessible, and up-to-date breastfeeding education for midwives/birth educators/lactation consultants/breastfeeding counsellors/doctors/other health professionals
- This education to include promotion of prolonged breastfeeding, late introduction of solids and infant-led weaning
- Appropriate workplace practices including extended maternity leave/security of tenure/job sharing
- Acknowledgement of the contribution of a breastfeeding mother to the physical, mental and emotional health of the next generation
- Widespread promotion of breastfeeding as a baby's birthright - it should not be negotiable.

In the last few months I have been given the opportunity to implement the Well4life Preconception Programs into two major pharmacy chains (Terry White Chemists and FeelGood Guide Pharmacies). At the same time the Pharmacy Guild of Australia Professional Development Division is reviewing a similar proposal for their members to gain access to these Programs. Making preconception care more widely known, as well as affordable and available in a trusted environment is not only paramount to the health of future generations, but is a firm foundation for successful breastfeeding. I would be pleased to incorporate any initiatives that relate to promotion of breastfeeding into the developing pharmacy model.

I believe that preconception health care for both prospective parents, reversing the trend to medically manage reproduction and ensuring that all babies can be confidently breastfed is absolutely essential for the physical, mental and emotional health of families. In addition to complete professional commitment to these goals, I have a personal history of breastfeeding for a total of ten years. The benefits are beyond price and I see them reflected every day in the robust good health, secure and confident young men who are my sons.

I welcome the opportunity to make this submission and look forward to a positive and effective report.

Yours sincerely

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