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**Equity in maternity care: Introducing midwifery continuity of care for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds**

Over one-third of the mothers birthing in Australia were born overseas, yet strong evidence shows that these women, compared to those Australian-born, are at increased risk of poor maternal and neonatal health outcomes and mental health issues. Migrant and refugee women face many barriers in accessing appropriate maternity care. Cultural differences, language barriers, racism, limited health literacy, and insufficient support influence the availability and utilization of current maternity services, increasing vulnerability and disadvantage.

Studies have demonstrated the importance and benefits of midwifery continuity of care for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The purpose of this policy is to provide equity in maternity care by creating a midwifery continuity of care model in ACT health facilities for women from migrant and refugee backgrounds by a primary CALD midwife or a culturally competent midwife.

This model entails strategies such as longer appointments with holistic individualised care, psychosocial and practical culturally tailored support and education, timely access to interpreters, group antenatal classes using interpreters, in-language information, staff education and training in cultural competency, and diversity in the workforce. A notes audit focused on birth outcomes for mothers and babies and surveys on women’s satisfaction and experience of their continuity of care and staff job satisfaction and confidence will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will improve health outcomes of women from migrant and refugee background and their babies, women's experiences of care, and overcome barriers to healthcare access which in turn fosters equity in our maternity system.

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