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**Improving mental health support for midwives within ACT Health**

There is mounting evidence that current measures to support the mental health of midwives are insufficient, leading to systemic issues of burnout, anxiety, depression, attrition and lack of work satisfaction. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this issue. Recent research identifies that obstacles to effective support systems for midwives include staffing issues, lack of engagement from those most at risk and a reactive approach from management. The Australian Capital Territory Health maternity system lacks a distinct policy for referral for support (both for self-referral and by recommendation from supervisors), further decreasing engagement with its existing Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

A policy to increase support will be implemented at the Centenary Hospital for Women and Children. The policy supports and includes a formalised process of debriefing after traumatic events. To let midwives know about this initiative, information about the policy will be distributed via a combination of inservices, pamphlets, online resources and posters. The policy introduces a method for measuring the prevalence of traumatic experiences amongst midwives at CHWC as well as improving engagement with debriefing and mental health support. Evaluation will be via midwives’ experience of the service provided. The collection of quantitative data on the level of exposure to trauma experienced by midwives at CHWC will also enhance future recommendations for implementing support measures for midwives.

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