



NZ COLLEGE OF MIDWIVES^(INC)

Media Release

3 May 2012

Call the Midwife – Confirming the Value of Community Based Continuity of Care

International Day of the Midwife – Saturday May 5th

It may be “good telly” as several reviewers have stated recently but the hit TV series *Call the Midwife* is also a positive reminder of the knowledge, skills and professionalism midwives bring to the care of women and babies.

NZ College of Midwives CEO, Karen Guilliland, says she doesn't want to glorify the 1950's era portrayed in the hit TV series however she says the respect shown for the profession and the importance of a midwife's role in a community are two of the many positives conveyed in the programme.

“In fact, the community based midwifery led model in New Zealand is not a million miles away from the model of service we are seeing in *Call the Midwife*,” she says. “The series has created a new interest in this successful maternity model. In some parts of the UK *media are reporting a growing call for a 21st-century version of that 1950s model of midwifery to be rolled out in a more community based form of care that could revolutionise British maternity services. We are fortunate to already have this in New Zealand.”

With more than 64,000 births in New Zealand every year and a midwife at 99% of them, Ms Guilliland says she would like this International Day of The Midwife (Sat 5th May) to acknowledge the important role of the midwife in a woman's pregnancy, labour and birth of her baby. The international theme for midwives day this year is “Midwives save lives” but community based continuity of care midwifery also provides mothers and families with a more sound start on the road to good parenting.

“Midwives are dedicated women,” she says. “They are well qualified, experienced and professional. Their focus is the wellbeing of women and their babies and in providing the very best care and support for them and their families at all times.”

Call the Midwife has just come to the end of its first six part run in the UK, attracting an audience of 9.6 million viewers. The BBC's head of drama, Ben Stephenson, commissioned a second series before the third episode had even aired.

ENDS

Please contact Ali Jones NZCOM External Media Relations on 027 247 3112 if you wish to speak to Karen Guilliland.

*** Media reference:**

By Joanna Moorhead, The Guardian, 21 February 2012.

Neighbourhood Midwives is the brainchild of a group of London midwives whose ambition is to extend the sort of one-to-one care recently portrayed in the hit BBC series *Call the Midwife*, which ended on Sunday night, – which tells the story of a group of midwives working in the East End of London – to women today. Annie Francis, the project's programme director, said the scheme would be piloted in a London borough this spring and would then, she hoped, extend across England and eventually the UK. "We've known for a long time that the sort of care we see in *Call the Midwife* works," said Francis. "It's called caseload midwifery and it was what everyone had in the 1950s.

"Women and their partners have the support, throughout the pregnancy, through the birth and once the baby is born, of a midwife or a small team of midwives who are based in the local community, and who they've come to know and to trust. Study after study has shown that it's what women want, that it's just as safe or safer for low-risk women, that it includes fathers much more effectively than the current maternity care system, that it can be delivered for the same cost, that it reduces the risk of instrumental deliveries and caesarean sections, and that it improves breastfeeding rates."