

Whānau Āwhina Plunket supports calls for priority MIQ spots for pregnant women and their partners

Whānau Āwhina Plunket is supporting Sir Peter Gluckman’s calls for priority MIQ spots for pregnant women and their partners, with the current system compromising their health and that of their unborn children.

Recent high-profile cases of pregnant women and their partners caught up in the MIQ lottery system have highlighted the issue for this vulnerable group.

In some cases, a pregnant woman may be stuck overseas because they cannot get an MIQ voucher or left without vital emotional support if their partner cannot enter the country to join them as they prepare to give birth.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket Chief Executive Amanda Malu says the extreme stress and pressure of being stranded overseas while waiting for an MIQ spot is a real concern for pregnant women and their whānau.

“In normal times, we know many women experience stress, anxiety, or depression during and after pregnancy.

“In Aotearoa New Zealand, studies suggest 12 to 18 per cent of pregnant women are clinically depressed. But additionally, an estimated 30 per cent of pregnant women experience lower levels of depression – and this group struggles to access appropriate support,” says Ms Malu.

“These are far from normal times, so when the stress and anxiety of pregnancy is compounded by MIQ-related concerns, the psychological and physical wellbeing of the mother and unborn baby are both likely to be at greater risk.

“It seems clear that the exception provided by the ‘critical care for a dependent’ category is not enough to ensure these women and their families are supported during this critical time,” says Ms Malu.

“Whānau Āwhina Plunket supports calls to make dedicated spots in MIQ for pregnant women and their partners.

“Let’s make the right call to ensure these pregnant mums are supported at this critical time, and that their babies get the very best start in life.

“Our vision at Whānau Āwhina Plunket is: ‘Kotahi mano ngā rā hiki te oranga mō ngā tipuranga i roto i te hāpori – In the first 1000 days setting the path of wellness in our communities, for generations to come.’

“Supporting our expectant mothers at this time in their lives is critical to achieving this vision.”

ENDS

For more information:

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