

M E M O R A N D U M

From: The County Medical Officer
of Health,
Guildhall Road,
Northampton.

To: District Nurse/Midwives.
(Copies to Medical Officers,
Superintendent Nursing Officer
and Assistant Superintendent
Nursing Officers.)

56/57. F.34.

4th November, 1957.

MULTIPAROUS CASES.

As you know, the Ministry of Health recommend that most multiparae who have had four or more children should be regarded as within the group having medical reasons for admission to hospital maternity beds. The procedure in the Department is that when a midwife reports that arrangements are being made for a multiparae 4+ to have her confinement at home, a letter is sent to the General Practitioner informing him of the Ministry's views that these women are included among the priority cases and that if he so desires, endeavours will be made to reserve a bed for his patient. In most instances, the patient is confined at home and a memorandum is sent advising you that as soon as labour begins you should let the family doctor know, in view of the increased risk of post partum haemorrhage in a woman who has had four or more children. Some midwives, I understand, have made it a practice to send for the doctor in these cases and the purpose of this memorandum is to let you know that you should not do so because it is for the doctor to decide whether or not he will attend.

I realise that if you are called out in the middle of the night you can usually let the doctor know that labour has started only by sending a relative to inform him. The relative may either get the message wrong or not unnaturally think that the doctor ought to attend. Accordingly, I think it would be wise if in all of these cases you had a clear understanding with the doctor beforehand whether you will let him know when labour begins. If, however, the doctor should tell you he does not want to be notified when labour begins, you must respect his instructions. The only rule of the Central Midwives Board which deals with calling in Medical Aid is Rule E.14 : -

RULE E. 14.

"A practising midwife must call in a registered medical practitioner in all cases of illness of the patient or infant or in the case of any abnormality becoming apparent in the patient or infant during pregnancy, labour or the lying-in period."

C. M. Smith.
