

To: Senate Health and Human Services Committee

From: Lisa Gendron, RI Licensed Midwife, CPM

Date: May 5, 2026

Re: Support, Bill H8175/S2669 House and Senate Bills Requiring Insurance Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives

Madame Chairwoman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. My name is Lisa Gendron and here in support of Senate Bill 2669/House Bill 8175. I am a member of the Board of Directors of The National Association of Certified Professional Midwives, President of NACPM Rhode Island, and member of The RI Department of Health Midwifery Advisory Counsel. I am here representing myself as a community midwife.

Thank you to Senator Mack for sponsoring and Senators Vargas, Kallman, Murray, Lauria, Acosta, Urso, Valverde, Quezada, DiMario, and Ujifusa for co-sponsoring.

I am here to speak in support of this bill that would allow Licensed Midwives/ CPM insurance coverage to allow a cess for services and essential maternity care proven to safeguard the health and well-being of RI Mothers and newborn.

RI has a long history of innovation, and the passage of this bill would RI an opportunity to exhibit leadership in the cause of Maternal Health. In a country that spends more money on healthcare than any other developed country, we are disappointed and concerned to report that our outcomes for mothers and babies are not in line with other developed countries. RI is not exempt from this reality. The solution to this issue is complex, but midwives play an essential role.

Licensed midwives in Rhode Island are part of the solution in the state of RI to provide high quality, evidence-based, culturally appropriate, holistic healthcare to mothers and newborns, and also represent a growing workforce that RI is already investing in with The RI Certified Professional Midwifery (CPM) Equity Initiative (EI), a workforce development initiative that is building culturally congruent care options through training and certification and licensing of Certified Professional Midwives. This Bill would allow midwives working in your community to provide the highest evidence-based standard of care for mothers and babies. Midwifery care has been proven to be safe for low-risk birthing people^{2,3,4}, and access to standard-of-care midwifery increases the quality of care and safe outcomes.

This bill will represent cost savings in the following ways:

- reduce urgent care and other healthcare visits that burden our already taxed emergency care infrastructure
- improve access to care that has been shown to reduce costs to patients and insurers

Improve access to healthcare and increase positive community health outcomes. By providing insurance coverage for CPM midwifery our state will:

- increase access to screenings including cancer screenings for breast and cervical cancer in a primary care system in which many people cannot access primary care services
- increase access to perinatal care access in communities that may otherwise avoid healthcare
- increase community treatment for common conditions that increase morbidity and also for communicable conditions
- increase continuity of care and patient satisfaction
- increase health literacy through care interactions that include education

Thank you for hearing my testimony,



Lisa Gendron, LM, CPM

Sources

1. National Association of Certified Professional Midwives, 2025 Certified Professional Midwives Framework cited [2025, 9 April] Available from: <https://www.nacpm.org/cpmframework>
2. Alliman J, Stapleton SR, Wright J, Bauer K, Slider K, Jolles D. Strong Start in birth centers: Socio-demographic characteristics, care processes, and outcomes for mothers and newborns. *Birth*. 2019 Jun;46(2):234-243. doi: 10.1111/birt.12433. PMID: 31102319; PMCID: PMC6594238.
3. Nethery E, Schummers L, Levine A, Caughey AB, Souter V, Gordon W. Birth Outcomes for Planned Home and Licensed Freestanding Birth Center Births in Washington State. *Obstet Gynecol*. 2021 Nov 1;138(5):693-702. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000004578. PMID: 34619716; PMCID: PMC8522628.

4. Bovbjerg ML, Cheyney M, Hoehn-Velasco L, Jolles D, Brown J, Stapleton J, Everson C, Stapleton S, Vedam S. Planned Home Births in the United States Have Outcomes Comparable to Planned Birth Center Births for Low-Risk Birthing Individuals. *Med Care*. 2024 Dec 1;62(12):820-829. doi: 10.1097/MLR.0000000000002074. Epub 2024 Nov 8. PMID: 39514513; PMCID: PMC11542973.