

**Template for Written Testimony-Individual  
Rhode Island General Assembly**

**To:** House Health and Human Services Committee

**From:** Natasha Vargas

**Date:** March 13, 2025

**Re:** House Bill 5858 - Prescriptive Authority for Certified Professional Midwives

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Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony today. Thank you to Representatives Stewart, Alzate, Cruz, Shallcross Smith, Kislak, Potter, McGaw, and Casimiro for sponsoring this bill.

My name is Natasha Vargas and I'm writing in support of House Bill 5858. This bill establishes the scope of Certified Professional Midwives' practice and authority related to prescribing medication for their patients. This will allow CPMs to independently care for their patients and allow the potential of this growing workforce to be fully realized.

When I chose to birth with Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs), it was because I wanted care that was personalized, holistic, and deeply respectful of my body and my choices. My midwife provided that in every way—guiding me through my pregnancy, birth, and postpartum with unwavering support and expertise. But there was one frustrating and unnecessary roadblock: their inability to prescribe even basic, essential medications that would have made my journey smoother and healthier.

I have always struggled with low iron-deficiency anemia throughout my life. This made my postpartum challenging, feeling weak, experiencing mood swings, severe headaches, dizziness and lack of energy while caring for my infant child. My midwife, the very person who were monitoring my health most closely, knew exactly what I needed. They had the training to recognize the severity of my condition and the knowledge to prescribe medication that could have eased my suffering. But because of restrictive laws, they couldn't. Instead, I had to schedule an appointment with a separate provider—a provider who didn't know my pregnancy like my midwife did, who didn't have the same understanding of my body and care plan. That meant waiting for availability, missing work, and then, after finally seeing the doctor, explaining my situation all over again. It was exhausting.

This isn't just about convenience. It's about access to timely, effective care. When CPMs are able to prescribe within their scope of practice—medications for low iron-deficiency, constipation, and other well-woman and well-body needs—it means fewer barriers for families like mine. It means fewer delays, fewer unnecessary appointments, and more continuity of care with the providers we trust.

CPMs already have the training to prescribe these medications safely. Denying them the ability to do so only puts more strain on families, especially those in rural areas or with limited access to

additional healthcare providers. It forces people to jump through hoops for care they should be able to receive from the providers they've chosen and built relationships with.

For me, for my family, and for countless others, expanding CPMs' prescribing authority would be life-changing. It would mean more autonomy, better health outcomes, and a system that truly supports parents and babies. This bill is not just about policy—it's about people, about making sure families receive the care they need from the providers they trust.

I urge you to support the House Bill 5858 to ensure CPMs' ability to prescribe medication within their scope of practice. It's time to remove unnecessary barriers and allow midwives to provide the full spectrum of care they are trained and qualified to give. Families like mine deserve nothing less. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Natasha Vargas