

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

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Sarah Mead

Date: March 13, 2025

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

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

My name is Sarah Mead, and I am a Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) licensed in Rhode Island. I am writing in support of House Bill 5858, which would establish the scope of Certified Professional Midwives' practice and authority in prescribing limited medication for our patients. This bill would allow CPMs to independently care for our patients in alignment with our scope of training, thereby improving access to primary care for women of all ages and contributing to closing the healthcare gap within this population.

As a CPM serving the birthing population in Rhode Island, I am increasingly seeing patients who lack access to primary care providers or struggle with unpredictable availability when they do have one. CPMs serve a low-risk population, but common complications during pregnancy, like bacterial vaginosis (BV) or urinary tract infections (UTIs), can arise and require timely intervention. Left untreated, these conditions can result in preterm labor or miscarriage, potentially complicating what would otherwise be a healthy pregnancy.

In many cases, CPMs are already acting as the primary care provider for pregnant individuals, conducting assessments, monitoring lab results, and diagnosing common infections such as BV, yeast infections, or UTIs. However, when prescription medication is required, we are currently forced to refer patients to their primary care providers or walk-in clinics. These patients often experience delays in care, having to wait days or even weeks to be seen, or they end up seeking treatment in emergency rooms, which strains both medical resources and the patients themselves.

House Bill 5858 would allow CPMs to prescribe medications within our scope of practice, ensuring that we can provide timely, effective care for our patients without unnecessary delays or additional burdens on the healthcare system. This bill would empower Certified Professional Midwives to practice to the fullest of our training and expertise, improving outcomes for our patients and enhancing the accessibility of healthcare for birthing individuals in Rhode Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I fully support the passage of House Bill 5858 and the positive impact it will have on women's health and healthcare equity.