

Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Maria Prout

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. Thank you to Representatives Stewart, Alzate, Cruz, Shallcross Smith, Kislak, Potter, McGaw, and Casimiro for sponsoring this bill.

My name is Maria Prout, 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.

For families choosing out-of-hospital birth, the ability of a CPM to prescribe essential medications—such as those for postpartum hemorrhage, Rh incompatibility prevention, or infection treatment—can be lifesaving. Without this authority, patients are left to seek additional care from other providers, leading to unnecessary delays, increased financial burden, and potential gaps in care. In some cases, individuals may forego necessary medication altogether due to these barriers, putting them at greater risk for complications.

In my testimony supporting Senate Bill 479, which advocates for insurance coverage of Certified Professional Midwives, I shared that I wanted a home birth for my second pregnancy in 2021 but couldn't afford it. What I didn't mention was that I suffered a severe postpartum hemorrhage, losing over 2.5 liters of blood. Had I given birth at home, I would have needed to wait for a hospital transfer, which could have had devastating consequences. To ensure the safest and most effective care, CPMs must have the ability to prescribe and administer life-saving medications.

Additionally, many individuals under the care of CPMs may face significant challenges in accessing traditional healthcare settings due to financial, transportation, or systemic barriers. By allowing CPMs to prescribe medications in accordance with their training, we not only enhance continuity of care but also expand access to necessary treatments for those who may otherwise struggle to obtain them.

As a student midwife, I see the immense dedication and expertise that CPMs bring to their work. Their training prepares them to prescribe essential medications safely and effectively within their

scope of practice. House Bill 5858 recognizes and supports this vital role, ensuring that CPMs can provide the highest level of care to the families they serve.

I urge you to pass House Bill 5858 to ensure that certified professional midwives can practice to the fullest of their training and ability and prescribe medication for their patients. I intend to obtain CPM licensure after completing my midwifery program in 2027, making this bill crucial to both my future career and the clients I will serve. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.