



Rhode Island General Assembly

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Charline Mitchell, Executive Director, Birth By Queens Foundation Inc.

Date: February 2, 2026

Re: Support for House Bill 7275- Insurance Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives

Madame Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Birth By Queens Foundation Inc. is one of many organizations across the United States advocating to pass Insurance Coverage of Certified Professional Midwives. We are in strong support of House Bill 7275.

We would like to thank Representative Stewart for sponsoring and Representative Donovan, Boylan, Cotter, Caldwell, Fogarty, Cruz, Giraldo, Place and Kislak for co-sponsoring. The coalition is dedicated to promoting better maternal health care, including expanding access to licensed Certified Professional Midwives. Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) and Licensed Midwives (LMs) are trained and licensed individuals who can independently manage prenatal, pregnancy, and postpartum care, normal newborn care, and well-woman/ well-body care, including the management of common health problems. They can provide routine physical screenings like pap smears and annual bloodwork to people who are not pregnant, as well.

They practice primarily in an out-of-hospital setting (birth centers or homes) and focus on low-risk, physiologically normal birth. Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia have a path to licensure for CPMs. Licensed Midwife (LM) is a state certification, while Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) is a national certification. Offering culturally congruent, dignified, and respectful care, delivered in the safety of patients' homes, supported by the growing workforce of Certified Professional Midwives is part of the Rhode Island Maternal Health Task Force's Strategic Plan and can help to improve maternity care in our state.

Birth By Queens Foundation Inc. supports Rhode Islanders, particularly pregnant and birthing Rhode Islanders with prenatal and postpartum infant feeding support through our virtual support



group. I've personally seen the lack of awareness of the diversity of midwives available to birthing people.

With your leadership, we can improve health equity and access for pregnant and birthing individuals in Rhode Island. I'm urging you to help improve the maternal health landscape in Rhode Island by supporting HB7275 that will increase access to midwifery, a holistic model of care. We urge you to support expanding Rhode Islanders' access to the providers of their choice for their healthcare. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

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