

Feb. 1st, 2026

To:
House Committee HHS

Dear Committee Members,

I am a resident of Cranston, and I am writing in support of the House bill H7275. This bill helps to expand insurance and Medicaid coverage of Certified Professional Midwives (CPM) and there is a lot of evidence to support it as well.

I am a Senior BSN Nursing Student at RIC on the midwifery path myself and hope to see this state continue to be a beacon for the power of midwives to impact public health. Currently the state lacks Primary Care Providers, hospital staffing is short, and space on birthing floors is at capacity often for many hospitals. “Home births also allow both the patient and the newborn increased access to individualized support, while reducing strain on hospital systems burdened....with staffing shortages.” (Applebaum, 2022) Current out of pocket expense makes low risk home birth cost prohibitive for most families, but “women who are Medicaid-eligible are also far more likely to report feeling safer delivering at home than women who are privately insured.” (Applebaum, 2022) Statistically, well selected low risk patients and infants are safe and less likely to receive unnecessary interventions at home.

Bill H7275 mandating insurance coverage of the care provided by the CPM care providers is vital to making a dent in the maternal mortality crisis in this country. “Despite similarly expressed interest in home birth among black and white women, black women comprise less than three percent of home birth participants.” (Applebaum, 2022) Community based models of culturally competent care have shown to decrease maternal mortality and morbidity and would advance health equity in RI. 90% of the current midwives are white, despite historically black midwives being the original birth care workers in this country. Expanding insurance coverage creates paths for midwives of color in this state to operate successful businesses, while supporting the community, so this bill expands equity on both sides while also creating savings for insurers since home birth is vastly less expensive than hospital birth.

Resources:

<https://unitedstatesofcare.org/maternal-and-child-health-medicaid-policy-landscape-state-trends/>

Applebaum, J. (2022), Expanding certified professional midwife services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Birth, 49: 360-363. <https://doi-org.ric.idm.oclc.org/10.1111/birt.12643>

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of expanding CPM coverage.

Rachelle Friesen

Cranston, RI

Co-President of the Doulas of RI

Certified Perinatal Doula

Rhode Island College: School of Nursing Student