

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

To: House Health and Human Services Committee

From: Lorie Michaels

Date: February 3, 2025

Re: House Bill 7277 - Insurance Coverage of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors

Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 7277. I would also like to thank Representative Stewart for sponsoring this bill, along with Representatives Donovan, Boylan, Cotter, Caldwell, Fogarty, Cruz, Giraldo, and Place for their co-sponsorship.

My name is Lorie Michaels, and I am writing in strong support of House Bill 7277, which would require insurance coverage for the services of Licensed Certified Lactation Counselors (CLCs).

I am a Licensed Certified Lactation Counselor, and I work closely with families during pregnancy and the early postpartum period—often at moments when timely, accessible support makes a critical difference. Many families encounter common, early feeding challenges such as latch concerns, discomfort, questions about milk supply, or uncertainty about what is “normal.” When these concerns are addressed promptly, families are far more likely to meet their feeding goals and continue breastfeeding or chestfeeding in ways that feel sustainable and supported.

Unfortunately, for many families, cost is a significant barrier to accessing this early support. I regularly encounter parents who delay or forgo lactation care because it is not covered by insurance, even when help is needed right away. By the time support becomes accessible, challenges may have escalated—sometimes leading families to stop feeding earlier than they intended.

Licensed CLCs play an important and clearly defined role within the lactation care landscape. We provide education, practical support, and reassurance within our scope of practice, and we refer to IBCLCs and medical providers when more complex clinical care is needed. I deeply respect and value the expertise of IBCLCs and view CLCs as complementary partners in a tiered, collaborative model of care that benefits families and the healthcare system as a whole.

Insurance coverage for Licensed CLC services would allow families to access appropriate support earlier, reduce stress during a vulnerable time, and ensure referrals are made thoughtfully and appropriately when needed. It would also allow professionals like me to serve more community members—particularly families who would otherwise

be unable to afford care—without financial strain being the deciding factor in whether support is offered.

Passing House Bill 7277 would meaningfully improve access to lactation support across Rhode Island, strengthen continuity of care, and help families receive the right level of support at the right time. For these reasons, I strongly urge the Committee to support and pass this bill.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to the health and well-being of Rhode Island families.

Respectfully submitted,
Lorie Michaels, CLC
Licensed Certified Lactation Counselor