

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 H7277. This bill helps to expand insurance coverage of Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC).

In 2024 the governor signed Bill H7882 RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LACTATION COUNSELORS PRACTICE ACT OF 2014. This act specified the requirements and procedures for licensing lactation counselors as well as the renewal, expiration, termination, refusal, revocation and suspension of licenses. CLCs were added to this provision with the IBCLCs and have their own external Board that maintains their certifications so this is not a factor as other testimony has mentioned.

Access to greater support for normal lactation concerns will boost the length of time a parent provides breastmilk to their infant which enhances many health outcomes for parent and baby. The hospitals currently either have no lactation support many days or overburdened IBCLC's see a parent one time before they are discharged. This is not adequate continuous care for parents learning to breastfeed. A CLC that can come to their home and provide support is better long term personalized support for those experiencing normal lactation issues, then freeing up the IBCLC's to handle the more complex patients.

Medicaid and many private insurers do not cover in home support currently which leaves huge equity and access gaps in support for breastfeeding parents. This bill can correct that.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of expanding CLC coverage.

Rachelle Friesen
Cranston, RI
Co-President of the Doulas of RI
Certified Perinatal Doula
Rhode Island College: School of Nursing Student