

February 3, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support of the proposed legislation to update the Certified Direct-Entry Midwife (CDM) statutes and regulations. I am a Certified Nurse-Midwife (CNM) practicing at the Alaska Native Medical Center for the last 9 years. I have had the privilege to attend over 1000 births of Alaska's newest residents. I am currently serving as a member of the State of Alaska Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

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The proposed legislation would accomplish two very important goals. The first would be to move several rules governing practice from statute to regulation. Once these practice guidelines are in regulation, the board would be able to keep them updated and maintain them with current, evidence-based recommendations for standards of care. When the statutes were written, they were appropriate for the time, but now they are 2 decades old, and are in danger of becoming obsolete.

It is imperative that we practice evidence-based care in order to achieve the healthiest outcomes. In my group at the Alaska Native Medical Center, we meet weekly to review the latest research findings and discuss ways that we can incorporate best practice into our clinical guidelines. The state of the science is always evolving and it takes considerable effort to stay current. Unfortunately, the State of Alaska Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives has not been able to maintain current practice guidelines because the practice guidelines are locked into statute instead of regulation where it can be updated by the board.

The second goal of this proposed legislation is to clarify the definition of different categories of midwives and articulate the scope of the board with regard to these different groups. There are three types of midwives practicing in Alaska. Certified Nurse-Midwives (CNM) are regulated by the Board of Nursing and licensed as Registered Nurses and Advanced Nurse Practitioners. Certified Direct-Entry Midwives (CDM) are graduates of a state approved educational program, complete an apprenticeship with a preceptor approved by the State of Alaska, and pass a national competency exam, the North American Registry of Midwives (NARM). For lack of a better term, the third type of midwife is a "traditional midwife". When the statute was written in 1992, an exemption was noted for a "person's cultural traditions" in the attendance of births. This third group is clearly distinct from both CNMs and CDMs, having not had any formal education, national competency exams, or state licensure. It is in the interest of public safety to have all midwives licensed and regulated by the state in a standardized manner, regardless of cultural traditions.

Thank you for considering these points carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

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