

Midwives Association of Alaska

MAA

Susan Terwilliger, President



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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter of support of the Midwifery Bill on behalf of the membership of the Midwives Association of Alaska (MAA). As the current President of MAA, I can assure you that our organization is fully supportive and excitedly hopeful that this proposed Bill will travel the necessary routes of the Alaska Legislation and pass into law.

The content of the proposed changes to the Statutes of the current Midwifery Law has been discussed in many MAA meetings over the course of years, with representation from all the regions of Alaska where licensed Certified Direct-Entry Midwives (CDMs) practice. We are unified in our endeavors to get this Bill passed with your support and help.

The necessity of this Bill is based in a need to keep current with best practices in Midwifery, to define the experience needed in midwifery in order to become a qualified preceptor, to clarify the time frame midwives may provide postpartum care to babies, and to eliminate the clause of cultural midwife. This last issue, which gave special consideration for the cultural or village midwife, has not been used over the years as it was intended. It needs to be taken out of the CDM statutes for clarity of the distinct licensing responsibilities of the CDM and for public safety.

The proposed Bill's first change is to move the standards of practice section into Regulation. Once this list of actual practice requirements is in Regulation, updates could be eventually implemented by the state Midwifery Board as they deem prudent or necessary based on

current information and changes in standards of care. Keeping this list in Statutes, as it is now, keeps midwifery locked into 1983 standards, unable to update without a change in legislation.

MAA believes that public safety would benefit from an added requirement of at least 50 attended births to the current requirement of at least two years as a licensed practicing midwife in order to be a teacher, a preceptor. We also need clarification for the care we give to the babies of the women we attend. Four (4) weeks postpartum is the current standard for Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), and we are satisfied with that standard in our Statutes.

The proposed Midwifery bill is more about “housekeeping” than any substantive changes to the standards Alaska requires of its licensed direct-entry midwives. The number of women who use midwifery care is statistically higher in Alaska than most states in the Lower 48. We, the practitioners of this important option for childbearing women, would like to see our Midwifery Law be a leader in its field.

Thank you so much for your time reading this letter of support. I welcome any questions you might have, and may refer you to the other leaders in MAA, especially those who have practiced in Alaska since the first Bill was enacted.

Respectfully,

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