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March 3, 2022

Senator David Wilson, Chairman
Senate H&SS Committee

Jasmine Martin, Committee Aide
Senate H&SS Committee

Alaska Senate
Alaska State Capitol, Rm 121
Juneau, AK 99801

Comments on SB 192: An Act relating to midwives and the practice of midwifery...."

Dear Senator Wilson,

The Alaska APRN Alliance has reviewed this bill in detail. We support the move to change the name from certified direct entry midwives to **Licensed Midwives**. This change will bring consistency for this provider type who are certified by a professional board examination and then are **licensed** by the state.

We also support the continuation of the Board of Midwives. It is important to have health care professional applications and practice reviewed like other health care professionals. This assures consistency of practice and adherence to a scope of practice. As health care providers we are ethically bound to assure quality patient care is delivered in a safe manner and that the public has faith that care for Alaskans meets national, state and community standards of care.

To that end we support Sec. 08.65.030 (1) thru (10) as written regarding the duties and powers of the board.

The APRN Alliance however does have concerns regarding most of the other changes proposed in this bill. Our concerns include:

1. Sec. 7. AS 08.65.010 (b): **We strongly oppose the proposed changes to the composition of the board.** The bill proposes eliminating the position of a physician with obstetrical practice and the position of a certified nurse midwife who is licensed as an advanced practice registered nurse. The board adopts regulations, makes licensing decisions, and takes disciplinary actions. These decisions are based on medical science, it is therefore imperative that someone with medical education and training be involved in the decision making.
2. Sec. 08.65.050 qualifications for license: We are concerned about placing in statute the requirement for basic life support for health care providers. This requirement for initial and ongoing certification belongs in regulation along with the regulation to require ongoing certification in neonatal resuscitation.
3. Sec. 9. AS 08.65.040 (3) adds a new sub section prohibiting regulations to be established regarding transfer agreements. The Division of Public Health's Section of Women's, Children's



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and Family Health just finished a year-long quality improvement project with the direct entry midwives, Certified Nurse Midwives and Obstetrical physicians from several Alaskan communities to develop model transfer agreements to promote improved outcomes for mothers and/or babies who must be transferred to a hospital setting. We are concerned that this section dismisses the work done to date and does not support quality of care. **We are opposed to this new subsection.**

4. Sec. 9. AS 08.65.040 (4) adds a new subsection prohibiting the development of regulations for limiting the locations of where midwives may practice. It is unclear what the intent of this prohibition is.
5. Sec. 17 AS 08.65.140 (d) adds a new subsection providing health care services using “audio, video, and other electronic media”. This additional subsection as stated is broader in its application than the telehealth statutes currently in force for physicians and advanced practice registered nurses and **has no requirement to HIPAA compliant software and excludes other requirements currently in statute. We oppose the inclusion of this subsection as written.**
6. Sec.23 AS08.65.90 (3). We **oppose** the expansion to allow the inclusion of preconception care of women. This is not in the scope of practice documents outlined by the National Association of Certified Professional Midwives.
7. Sec. 30 AS 21.42.355 New subsections (c) and (d) regarding health insurance plans. These subsections need a thorough analysis of their contribution to the cost of healthcare and the impact on commercial and ERISA health care plans. **These subsections should be removed from the bill until they are thoroughly vetted.**
8. Sec 40 Transition of New Board Members: **We strongly oppose this transition plan** to remove the physician member on the board and substitute in advanced practice registered nurse midwives with only those who practice in out of hospital settings.

In conclusion, while the bill updates some language for midwives who are not advanced practice registered nurses, **a large portion of the bill seeks to expand midwife practice beyond their education, dilutes the composition of the board that is responsible for assuring their safe practice, and risks patient privacy. If enacted into law, we believe the result will be a decrease in patient care and an increase in health care costs.**

The APRN Alliance requests that you further study the potential impacts and costs of the changes you are proposing before requesting further committee action. We stand ready to work with you to produce legislation that benefits all Alaskans.

With respect and kind regards,

Marisa Bune, APRN, NP-C, CCRN-K
President, Alaska APRN Alliance