



March 31, 2025

Re: Support of Senate Bill 2109 modifying reimbursement rates for services provided by birth centers in the medical assistance program

Dear Chair Melissa Wiklund and Members of the MN Senate Health + Human Services Committee,

On behalf of the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC), I am writing in strong support of Minnesota Senate Bill 2109, which modifies reimbursement rates for services provided by birth centers in the medical assistance program.

AABC has national expertise and decades of experience in the safe operation of birth centers. Midwifery-led birth centers, which provide high-quality, cost-effective, evidence-based care for the majority of pregnancy types, have demonstrated superior outcomes, lower cesarean rates, and dramatically reduced healthcare costs.

The largest barrier to vastly increased access to midwifery is the systematic unsustainably poor reimbursement of midwives and birth centers. By passing SF 2109, Minnesota will create equity and longevity in the birth center workforce and increase access to freestanding birth centers for Minnesota's childbearing families.

Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kate Bauer", is written over a faint, stylized graphic element.

Kate Bauer
Executive Director

Enclosure: AABC Position Statement "Sustainable Reimbursement for Midwifery-Led Birth Center Care"



POSITION STATEMENT

Sustainable Reimbursement for Midwifery-Led Birth Center Care

In accordance with multiple federal initiatives, and as a concerted action to improve perinatal mortality through the appropriate utilization of birth center and midwifery services, the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) officially recognizes and calls for the following:

Wherein we recognize:

- The United States ranks 67th in the world for maternal mortality. This rate is still increasing.
- The United States stands in 54th place globally for neonatal mortality.
- Mortality rates for BIPOC birthing people are significantly higher than their demographically-matched white counterparts.
- The United States is number one in spending on healthcare.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends midwives as an evidence-based approach to reduce maternal mortality, however midwifery is being underutilized in the US.
- 75% of births occurring in industrialized nations outside the United States are attended by midwives while only 12% of births are attended by midwives within the United States.
- The largest barriers to vastly increased access to midwifery are the systematic unsustainably poor reimbursement of midwives and birth centers or their exclusion entirely
- There is a clear and direct correlation between midwives acting as the first line of care providers during pregnancy and birth, and superior outcomes including decreased perinatal and neonatal mortality, reduced medical interventions, and improved experience.

We therefore support the following:

- Separate professional and facility services reimbursement for each patient cared for by a provider including the birthing person and the baby.
- Maternity and newborn services shall be reimbursed at the same rate, regardless of licensed provider type or location.

- Maternity and newborn services shall be reimbursed at the same rate, regardless of state recognized facility type.
- Inclusion and reimbursement without discrimination of all licensed midwifery providers by every insurance plan, public or private.
- Standardized facility code sets common to all maternity and newborn services, regardless of location, to mitigate misuse of insurance dollars.
- National recognition of freestanding birth centers as defined by the AABC Standards for Birth Centers and accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC) as the first line of care.
- National recognition of midwives as primary care providers for pregnancy and birth.

The AABC states, unequivocally, that midwives and birth centers are the single most underutilized resource in ending the maternal health crisis and bringing the United States back into the top-tier for its care of mothers, birthing people, infants, and families.

REFERENCES

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ENDORSED BYOrganizations

American College of Nurse-Midwives
The Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers
International Cesarean Awareness Network
Association of Texas Midwives
Alma Midwifery Services
Corpus Christi Birth Center PLLC
Dulce Birth & Wellness Center
Heart of Gaia Midwifery Services
Jubilee Birth Center
Katy Birth Center
Lone Star Birth
Ma Bailey's
Minnesota Birth Center
Nativiti Family Birth Center, LLC
Origins Birth and Wellness Collective
Revolution Birth Services
Serenity Birth & Women's Center
Seven Sisters Midwifery and Community Birth Center
Sun Valley Birth & Wellness
The Bastrop Birthing Center

Individuals

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|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Abbie Hull | JacQuesha Colson-Smith | Naomi Thomas |
| Amanda Meyer | Jami Hain | Natalie Harrell |
| Amy Fisher | Jamie Gwynn | Natalie Wommack |
| Anna Hepso | Jennifer Molitor | Patricia Gross, LM, CPM |
| Aszani Stoddard | Jennifer Russell | Rachel Bruns |
| Bridget Wojtowich | Jeremy Cramer-Elsner | Rebekah Lewis |
| Brieana Davisom | Jessica Miller | Rosabeth Self |
| Camellia Alice May | Joi Brock | Ruth Bailey |
| Carrie Dickson | Kathryn Marie Schrag | Shawna Chambers |
| Carrie Young | Kelly Bolerjack | Shelby Cook |
| Christina Buchanan | Kiva Celeste | Sophie Gettings |
| Christine Mesich | Kristin Green | Sue A Beavis |
| Claudia Jennings | Kristine Devens | Toni Kimpel |
| Darre'll Wallace | Laurie Fremgen | Torrey Cramer-Elsner |
| Deborah Weitkamp | Lev Meerson | |
| Deirdre O'Neil | Lori Geller | |
| Diane Dreier | Melody Morrow | |
| Hailey Smith | Molly Germash | |
| Heather Christopher | Monica Salaz | 9.27.24 |