



Reproductive Health Equity Alliance of Maryland (RHEAM)

SB0684 - Maryland Licensure of Certified Midwives Act

Presented to the Honorable Paul Pinsky and Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

March 2, 2021 1:00pm

Position: SUPPORT

The Reproductive Health Equity Alliance of Maryland (RHEAM) is a cohort of community-based birth workers, policy and legal advocates, and organizations focusing on reproductive justice, pregnancy and infant health. We aim to reduce pregnancy and infant health disparities in Maryland's Black, Brown and immigrant communities by advocating for evidence-based legislative and policy solutions that expand access to quality reproductive, pregnancy and infant health options designed to build healthy and stable families of color. We stand in strong support of SB 684, sponsored by Delegate Bagnall, because it would allow for the practice of midwifery to grow in the state of Maryland, and provide birthing individuals more options for their birth and perinatal healthcare.

There are three different midwife credentials in the United States: 1) Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), Certified Midwife (CM), and Direct Entry/Certified Professional Midwife (CPM).¹ Currently, Maryland has paths to licensure for CNMs and CPMs, and this bill would create a path for licensure for CMs. Both Certified Nurse Midwives and Certified Midwives are trained at a master's level education, and are considered primary care providers. They can attend births in all settings, including hospital, home and birth centers, and can provide care throughout the perinatal period. Both CMs and CNMs are certified and accredited through the same organization and national exam.

In 2013, the Accreditation Commission for Midwifery Education (ACME) released a statement that "encourages its state affiliates to support licensure of CMs in every state as a key factor in the success of the midwifery profession."² They argue that the midwifery profession has been unable to grow, because it has been unnecessarily linked to the nursing profession in most states.² Further, in 2019, the American College of Nurse Midwives recommended that all 50 states pass legislation that provides all CNM's and CM's with full practice authority, and to remove all restrictions to practice in all 50 states.³ This bill would allow for the expansion of midwifery practice in the state of Maryland, and would provide an avenue for licensure for Certified Midwives. This would provide birthing families more choice in selecting their healthcare provider, and guarantee that more individuals can have the exact birthing experience that they seek.

For these reasons, RHEAM urges the committee to issue a **favorable** report on **SB 684**. Please contact Cassidy Spence at 541-505-4077 or cassidy_radloff@email.gwu.edu if you have any questions about this testimony.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Members of RHEAM

1. FINAL-ComparisonChart-Oct2017.pdf. Accessed February 1, 2021.
<https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/ccLibraryFiles/FILENAME/000000006807/FINAL-ComparisonChart-Oct2017.pdf>
2. Lichtman R, Farley C, Perlman D, et al. The Certified Midwife Credential and the Case for National Implementation. *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*. 2015;60(6):665-669. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/jmwh.12416>
3. Midwifery_Education_Trends_Report_2019_Final.pdf. Accessed February 2, 2021.
https://www.midwife.org/acnm/files/cclibraryfiles/filename/000000007637/Midwifery_Education_Trends_Report_2019_Final.pdf