

House Health Committee
May 28, 2019
Sarah Fallon
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chairman Merrin, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the House Health Committee,

My name is Sarah Fallon and I'm from Cleveland. I am a constituent of Representative Terrence Upchurch. I am disappointed that I am unable to be in Columbus to share my experience with group prenatal care. I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony.

First, allow me to thank Co-Sponsors Manning and Howse for bringing forward this important bill. We are grateful to the leadership of both caucuses for recognizing the essential nature of the work to combat infant and maternal mortality in the state. We support all four elements of HB 11-smoking cessation, dental hygiene, lead education, and group pre-natal care.

Today, I would like to discuss why group prenatal care programs are so important to my community. I went through CenteringPregnancy for both of my pregnancies. In these group sessions I was able to hear and learn from expectant mothers, all of whom had due dates near mine. We shared our experiences, and hearing about other women and families going through similar struggles helped me to feel less alone. Women who already had children were able to encourage new mothers. New mothers were able to ask questions they didn't know they had, thanks to hearing different stories from a diverse group. Mothers with resources and wisdom were able to bring their wealth of knowledge to the group and empower fellow mothers.

This shared bonding experience was crucial to my having the confidence to have the birth I wanted, to make healthcare decisions with knowledge and discernment, and to make the best choices for me and my family. Pregnancy can be an isolating time, with mental, physical, and emotional tolls on women and their families. A community built on support, trust, and encouragement is the surest way to uplift women and create healthy families. I am forever grateful to Neighborhood Family Practice and the caring midwives and staff who nurtured my family through CenteringPregnancy.

Thank you for your time and your attention to this important issue.