

February 20, 2024

TO: Honorable Members of the Ohio Legislature

Subject: Support for legislation to include CNM provision of newborn care

I am writing this letter to express my support for legislation to recognize the nationally accepted role of Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs) and Certified Midwives in performing care of the normal newborn. Both CNMs/ CMs are educated, trained, and examined by the American Midwifery Certification Board to provide normal newborn care for the first 28 days of life. They are also required to renew their national certification, including newborn care, every 5 years. Supporting American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) documents include their Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics, Definition of Midwifery Practice, and Core Competencies – documenting that newborn care is a basic midwifery skill and part of midwifery board examination and certification (see attachments). Ohio certified nurse midwives are recognized in Ohio statute as primary care providers who serve Ohio women both during and after pregnancy. However, when drafting ORC Section 4723.43 the care of newborns was not included in the CNM scope of practice. We seek to remedy this.

A review from May of 2023 documents that over 30 other states grant statutory authority to CNMs / CMs for the provision of newborn care. These states include our neighbors in Michigan, Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Research consistently demonstrates the midwifery-led care results in positive outcomes, and they can fill an unmet need for newborn care providers in both urban and rural settings in Ohio. They are among the varied other Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) who currently provide both inpatient and outpatient, community-based care to newborns.

The March of Dimes has assigned a grade of “D” to Ohio regarding various maternal / newborn health care benchmarks. Allowing CNMs to practice at the top of their licensure and board certification will immediately provide approximately 463 additional care providers for some of Ohio’s most vulnerable citizens – our newborns. Thank you for considering this important issue and I look forward to following the outcomes of this proposed legislation. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine O'Dea, MD MPH". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine O’Dea, MD MPH FAAFP
5190 Muirwoods Court
Blue Ash, Ohio
cjodeamd@gmail.com
(513) 444-7356

