

North American Registry of Midwives

Providing Certification Standards
For Certified Professional Midwives

Ida Darragh, CPM, LM
Executive Director
Credentialing Specialist
Ida@narm.org

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Phone: 888-8424784
501-296-9769
testing@narm.org
www.narm.org

To: the Ohio House Committee on Families, Aging and Human Services:
From: The North American Registry of Midwives

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and Members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee – thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of HB 496 to license Certified Professional Midwives.

My name is Ida Darragh. I am a Certified Professional Midwife (since 1996), am licensed as a midwife in Arkansas (since 1983) and am the Executive Director of the North American Registry of Midwives, the organization that awards the credential for the Certified Professional Midwife (CPM).

The CPM credential is the only accredited credential that requires experience and training in attending births out of the hospital. It is the basis for licensure in the 37 states that have a path to legal practice for home birth midwives, including Ohio's bordering states of Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Early in the development of the credential, NARM sought evaluation and advice from Ohio State University's Department of Assessment under Dr Robert A. Mahlman and Dr. Deborah Bingham Catri, who provided guidance for the credential development in 1997. The CPM has been accredited since 2002 by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, the credentialing arm of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. The NCCA accreditation involves an extensive evaluation of all aspects of the credential which includes governance, financial stability, and representation of both stakeholders and the public, but which focuses extensively on the validity and reliability of the certification exam.

The certification process involves three major steps:

Documentation of education related to over 700 topics considered essential knowledge for out-of-hospital birth

Demonstration of a supervised clinical practicum of at least two years under the supervision of a registered preceptor

Passing of the 300 item, six hour certification exam

Recertification is required every three years and requires 25 hours of continuing education (including hours specific to cultural awareness), five hours of peer review, and ongoing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Neonatal Resuscitation courses.

In addition, NARM offers the post-certification Midwifery Bridge Certificate, which requires 50 continuing education hours in complications, emergencies, and professional issues. The MBC can only be awarded to someone who already has the CPM, but the CEUs can be obtained over a five year period and may be collected prior to obtaining the CPM. The renewal process for CPMs requires continuing education every three years, so obtaining the MBC is not an arduous process, but does assure an emphasis in critical areas.

Over the past 20 years, the CPM credential has been awarded to over 4,000 midwives. On average, NARM certifies about 300 new CPMs each year and the recertification rate is approximately 75-80%. The first CPM credential ever issued was to an Ohio midwife in 1994, and since that date the CPM has been issued to 67 midwives in Ohio with 47 still having active certification.

HB 496 meets NARM's goal of having licensure available for every CPM in the U.S, providing both a legal route to practice and a system for setting standards for practitioners. By licensing based on nationally, accredited standards the state of Ohio can meet the needs of both the CPMs and the families they serve.

As Executive Director of NARM, I offer consultation to midwives seeking licensure in their state and to state agencies that license Certified Professional Midwives. NARM strives to keep the credential accredited and up-to-date with national accreditation standards and to assist states in developing a licensure program that meets the national standards. I look forward to continuing this relationship in Ohio. I am available at any time by phone (501-296-9769) or email (ida@narm.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ida Darragh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ida Darragh, CPM, LM
Executive Director, North American Registry of Midwives