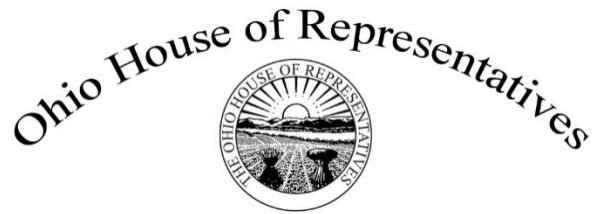


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Ashland and Medina Counties

**Health Provider Services Committee**  
**House Bill 545 – Sponsor Testimony**  
**Tuesday, June 18, 2024**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity for Representative McClain and I to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 545, regarding midwifery licensure and the creation of an advisory council for Ohio's Midwives. Thank you to Representative McClain for discussing why this legislation is needed in Ohio. I will now address the specifics of the bill.

Ohio law does not recognize the practice of certified midwives or licensed midwives. Currently, only Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM) are the only legally-enabled professional midwife type who can practice in Ohio. Ohio lags the country in midwife integration across many measures. If a woman wants a midwife for pregnancy, there are many types she can choose from that will give her different levels of care. House Bill 545 regulates the practice of certified midwives and licensed midwives.

**1. LICENSURE**

This legislation creates a pathway for midwifery licensure. Certified midwives and licensed midwives are required to be licensed by the Ohio Board of Nursing (certified nurse-midwife or certified midwife) or the Department of Commerce (licensed midwife). House Bill 545 also creates eligibility requirements that certified and licensed midwives must meet to receive their license, including training and instruction.

A **Certified Midwife (CM)** is a credential of the ACNM (American College of Nurse Midwives) for individuals who are not nurse-midwives. There are only a handful of Certified Midwives in the entire country.

The **Licensed Midwife** will be what the Certified Professional Midwife, who applies and is accepted for licensure under House Bill 545, will become. **Certified Professional Midwives (CPM)** are certified by NARM (North American Registry of Midwives) and there are many thousands across the country. The cornerstone for most states licensure for non-nurse midwives is the retirement for certification by NARM as part of licensing ability, which also require out-of-hospital training, unlike the Certified Midwife (CM). Under House Bill 545, **Certified International Midwives (CIM)** are also eligible for licensure in Ohio.

**Certified midwives** will be allowed to attend births in hospitals, homes, medical offices, freestanding birthing centers. They can provide care and examinations for newborns and are allowed to prescribe certain medications. **Licensed midwives** would be able to administer these medications as well. The bill extends to both a certified and licensed midwife the existing law requiring a certified nurse-midwife to

(1) practice in collaboration with a physician and (2) enter into a standard of care arrangement with the collaborating physician.

## **2. PROTECTING TRADITIONAL MIDWIVES**

However, there are some exemptions to this licensure to protect traditional (lay) midwives, apprentices under the supervision of a traditional midwife, and others that will not need to follow these requirements. A traditional midwife must disclose to each client in writing that he or she is not a licensed midwife.

## **3. LICENSED MIDWIFERY ADVISORY COUNCIL**

This legislation will also **create a Licensed Midwifery Advisory Council within the Ohio Department of Commerce** and requires it to advise and make recommendations to the Department regarding the practice and regulation of licensed midwives. The Council will consist of nine (9) members including:

- One (1) certified nurse-midwife and one (1) certified midwife or certified nurse-midwife appointed to the Board of Nursing
- Four (4) licensed midwives, including one practicing in an urban setting and one serving a plain Amish or Mennonite community
- One (1) physician who is board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology and with experience consulting with midwives
- One (1) physician who is board-certified in neonatal medicine and with experience consulting with midwives
- One (1) member of the public who has experience utilizing or receiving midwifery services in locations other than hospitals.

We believe that this legislation will benefit existing midwives, encourage others to become midwives, and reduce the number of maternity health deserts in Ohio.

On behalf of Representative McClain and myself, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 545 and we welcome any questions you may have.