

I am a Certified Professional Midwife practicing since 2013 in the southwest Ohio/northern Kentucky area. I am the current President of Ohio NACPM (National Association of Certified Professional Midwives). I have been licensed in Kentucky since 2020, when the first licenses were issued.

CPMs and CMs are the only midwifery certification that requires experience with attending births outside of a hospital setting. Our practices are client-centered, and we view pregnancy and birth as by and large normal life events. We employ the Midwife Model of Care tenets to provide individualized care with minimal technological intervention; monitor the physical, psychological, and social well-being of the parent; and identify and refer people who require a higher level of care appropriately. We have a strong emphasis on education and autonomy, recognizing that the appropriate person to make decisions about their care is the pregnant person. This type of care has been shown in well-designed studies to lead to excellent outcomes for mothers and babies.

HB 545 provides legal protection for midwives for the care we are already providing and increases accountability and transparency. This bill contains requirements for midwives to provide relevant information to patients including their credentials, escalation of care steps, and practice philosophy and obtain the patient's informed consent before providing care. This is not a legal requirement in our current system. HB 545 requires midwives to create an individualized transfer plan with each patient and, in the event of transfer, provides EMS and the receiving hospital liability protection for any services or care provided before, during, or after transfer. HB 545 protects independent practice for CPMs, with no physician or hospital collaborative agreement required.

HB 545 provides multiple paths to license including CPM + Bridge Certificate, MEAC accredited education and license reciprocity with other states that already license CPMs. Most practicing Ohio midwives are already CPMs and the addition of the Bridge Certificate is an accessible addition that complies with US MERA recommendations.

The midwifery board created by this bill will create regulations for CPM practice in this state. Accountability to a board and established standards of care increase safety for families. As it stands currently, families have no ability to address practice issues with remediation because there is no board to address these concerns. Practice deficiencies can't be corrected, leading to the potential for poorer outcomes. HB 545 also creates an adverse outcome and data reporting system to study the impact of midwifery on maternal and infant health outcomes.

HB 545 increases safety and accessibility to appropriate care for clients. Our training prepares us to be independent care providers during the childbearing year, with the ability to utilize standard testing to screen for potential issues in order to advise clients about their health status and make appropriate recommendations and referrals. HB 545 maintains the appropriate autonomous practice of CPMs and provides for the ability to order testing such as ultrasound and labs. CPMs will be legally permitted to carry and administer medications for hemorrhage, oxygen, RhoGAM, vitamin K and others so that families who choose to birth outside of a hospital have similar safety nets available to them.

For these reasons, I ask you to vote in favor of HB 545.