

September 14, 2015

Dear Representative Franz and Regulatory Reform Committee Members,

I am writing in OPPOSITION of HB 4598, the Certified Professional Midwife (CPM) Licensure Bill.

I am a Registered Nurse and a Certified Nurse Midwife, originally licensed in Michigan in 1997. During the last 15 years I have operated a freestanding birth center which also offered home birth services. Previous to that I worked with a CPM who operated a birth center and home birth service in Taylor , MI.

For five years I was a board member at large of the Michigan Midwives Association (MMA), and a member of MMA for several additional years until 2013. During that time I participated in MMA peer review sessions discussing cases where mothers or babies had complications that resulted in death or injury.

I became certified as a Neonatal Resuscitation Instructor in 2009 and began teaching Neonatal Resuscitation classes for MMA that same year, teaching 2-3 classes each year with groups of 6-15 midwives and apprentices in each class.

All of these experiences have provided me intimate insight into the education, knowledge, skills, and decision making of the CPMs, and other lay and direct entry midwives in Michigan.

The bill does not address the most important safety issues regarding birth, which are the knowledge, skills, education, and decision making that CPMs claim to have. In states where midwifery is more strictly regulated, education is standardized, and midwives must adhere to strict risk out criteria. The one state, Florida, that requires CPMs and other licensed midwives to be insured for malpractice and liability, has seen a decrease in the number of baby deaths related to care provided by Licensed Midwives (LMs and CPMs)

I oppose HB 4598 for the babies who have died while they and their mothers were in the care of a CPM or other lay or direct entry midwife. Each of these babies were healthy and full term. If midwives had risked out these mothers, and transferred them to CNM or Obstetrician care at the hospital, each of these babies would be alive today. They are:

Kaylee Jean Parrish, 1991, Vaginal Birth After 2 Cesareans, prolonged, obstructed labor, maternal seizures. Mother Laura Parrish and her baby Kaylee both died. Midwife: Patrice Bobier, CPM

Unnamed Baby, 1997, prolonged labor, use of homemade vacuum extractor, obstructed labor, baby died. (This death was followed by and reported on by Channel 7, WDIV) Midwife: Valerie al Halta, CPM

Baby Girl Darty, 2002, postdates, 43 weeks with known oligohydramnios (no amniotic fluid), meconium aspiration syndrome, died. Midwife: Anna Amick

Colton Pospeshiel, 2000, 42 weeks postdates, prolonged labor, 8 minute shoulder dystocia. Baby died. Midwife: Bridgett Cuipka, CPM

Kate Holden, 2005, 42 wks 3 days postdates, oligohydramnios (amniotic fluid less than 5 , 5 days before labor- normal is greater than 10), protracted and obstructed labor, meconium, uterine rupture, baby died. Midwives: Kip Kozlowski & Clarice Winkler, CNMs.

Alla Mushin, 2008, 43 weeks postdates, stillborn, chorioamnionitis and sepsis. (Covered and reported on by WXYZ, Detroit) Midwife, Bridgett Cuipka, CPM

Magnus Snyder, 2011, breech, entrapped head, tight cord around the neck, baby died. Midwives: Clarice Winkler & Shellie Ross, CNMs, Audra Post, CPM

Wren Sorrow, 2012 at Greenhouse Birth Center. Midwives: Clarice Winkler & Shellie Ross, CNMs, Audra Post, CPM

Unnamed Baby, 2012 baby died at Greenhouse Birth Center in Okemos, may have been a cord prolapse. Reported in Lansing Sate Journal. Midwives: Clarice Winkler & Shellie Ross, CNMs, Audra Post, CPM

Kaiya Lynn Furnace, 2012, chorioamnionitis, sepsis, shoulder dystocia, baby died. Midwife Kate Mazarra, CPM

Unnamed Baby, 2012, shoulder dystocia. Midwife: Goldie Parker (direct entry midwife).

Pippin Francis Muller, 2012. Midwife: Patrice Bobier, CPM

Unnamed Baby, 2012, preterm double footling breech. Baby survived. Midwives: Stacia Proefrock, CPM, and Kate Mazarra, CPM.

Unnamed baby, approx. 2012 or 2013, severe shoulder dystocia-baby's status unknown. Midwife: Amanda Topping, CPM

Babies that survived:

Sophia and Benjamin, 2012, mother Lindsay, twins born at home with a fused placenta. Midwives: Stacia Proefrock, CPM, Kate Mazarra, CPM, Cynthia Jackson, apprentice midwife.

There are also cases involving the mothers:

Unnamed mother, maternal retained placenta, 2014, midwife transferred mom days later when the mother developed a fever. Midwife: Kate Mazzara, CPM

Unnamed mother, approx. 2008, preeclampsia progressed to seizures during labor with admission to Neuro ICU for maternal stroke. Midwife: Kate Mazarra, CPM.

Unnamed mother, approx. 2008 maternal postpartum stroke. Midwife: Kate Mazarra, CPM.

Artificial insemination is also offered by Stacia Proefrock, CPM and this bill does not address that procedure when performed by a CPM. <http://www.trilliumbirthservices.com/fertility.htm>

Please consider that several of the CPMs that provided prenatal care and were present for the labor or births of the babies who died or were injured have testified before Michigan House of Representative committees as to their education and the safety of their practices, as well as the safety of CPMs in general, in support of HB 4598. They also are, or have been, the president, vice president, or treasurer for the MMA.

When you consider action on this bill, please keep these babies and mothers in mind. Women have the right to chose where to give birth and with whom. Babies are not given that choice, and otherwise healthy, full term babies have died. Births that take place at home or at a freestanding birth center should only be to women and babies that have no risk factors. The mothers and babies listed above had substantial risk factors, and should all have been risked out and transferred to physician and hospital care. If these CPMs, and other lay or direct entry midwives, have not practiced safely previously, this bill, in current form, will not change that.

Please make home and birth center births safer by voting not to advance this bill without substantial changes.

Sincerely,
Linda Johnson, CNM
Temperance, MI