

RE: HB-3456 and HB-3451:

HB-3456 requires health benefit plan to reimburse care by licensed midwives in freestanding birth centers.

HB-3451 requires Oregon Health Authority to reimburse freestanding birth centers based on median cost to birthing centers in this state of providing services.

These two different but related bills are very much needed to support freedom for birthing families in the state of Oregon. Nearly half of all births in Oregon are covered by the Oregon Health Plan including both of my own. Current policies and practices make it difficult for OHP clients to have midwifery care costs covered. Women have the right to choose the birth provider and birth location that makes the most sense for their own families. For Oregon to license and approve midwifery care, yet make it financially difficult for half of all birthing families in Oregon to choose midwifery care, makes no sense.

Approving these two bills also benefits Oregon's financial picture as a whole. Midwifery care is less expensive than obstetrical care; on average midwifery care costs 1/3 to 1/2 as much as obstetrical care for similar or better health outcomes. Removing obstacles to midwifery care for Oregon women will help control our state's health care costs.

The Affordable Care Act requires that maternity care in freestanding birth centers be covered by OHP. Please bring Oregon into compliance with the federal mandates by approving HB-3456 and HB-3451.

Thank you,
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