

April 7, 2015

RE: HB 3456

Dear members of the House Committee on Health Care,

My name is Silke Akerson and I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Midwifery Council which represents Direct-Entry Midwives in Oregon and promotes family-centered and evidence-based maternity care for all families in our state.

I urge you to support House Bill 3456 which would bring Oregon into better alignment with the requirements of the Affordable Care Act and promote evidence based and cost effective maternity care.

Out-of-Hospital birth, at home or in a birth center, with a trained midwife is a safe and cost-effective option for healthy women experiencing low risk pregnancies. A growing number of countries, with the best maternal and infant health outcomes, have recognized the short and long term health and cost benefits of integrating these midwifery options into their health systems while the US has lagged behind (both in integration of midwifery into the health system and in maternal and infant health outcomes). The Affordable Care Act began to correct that by requiring Health Benefit Payers to reimburse licensed midwives in birth centers and while some payers in Oregon do reimburse Licensed Direct Entry Midwives, many others do not. This bill would correct this simple issue and bring all Oregon payers into compliance with this federal requirement, expanding access to an excellent option in maternity care.

Additionally I urge you to amend this bill to include Licensed Direct Entry Midwives providing care in the home settings not only the birth center setting as the care is equivalent in safety, equipment available at births, and training/scope of practice of the midwives.

Thank you for your consideration,

Silke Akerson, CPM, LDM
Oregon Midwifery Council