



Testimony in Support of House Bill 2845

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House Committee on Health Policy

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Chair Salinas and members of the committee, my name is Nancy MacMorris-Adix. I am a certified nurse midwife and chair of the Oregon Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives Legislative and Advocacy Committee. I am testifying in support of HB 2845, as it will improve patient autonomy and equity in childbirth in Oregon.

First I would like to highlight written testimony submitted by Dr. Duncan Neilson. In his testimony, he does a nice review of the previous legislative work on improving equity of access and sets the context for the importance of this bill.

Because community based birth is less expensive than hospital birth, this bill will save both the Medicaid system and private insurers money. In our current climate of rising costs, we should jump at anything that we know will lower costs.

In my practice, I too often am faced with women with significant fears about hospitals and their procedures. Whether this is based on specific bad incidences or not, it is quite real to these women. Adding this to the generalized fear that is common in women giving birth, it can be an obstacle. I have seen women who desire community based birth, either in a birth center or their own home, who feel pushed into the hospital by their insurance coverage.

I would like to share a story about a woman I delivered many years ago. She had a significant fear of needles and we had made a deal that she would let us draw labs when she was in active labor. She presented to the hospital having contractions and was clearly progressing. After I observed her for several hours and found that she had progressed to 6 centimeters, I told her we would admit her and draw her blood work. She was so afraid of needles that her labor stopped. I sent her home and she didn't return for 2 weeks! This is a pretty extreme case, but she was otherwise low risk and would have been a great candidate for a low intervention birth in the community.

Respecting the autonomy of women to make informed choices about their healthcare is a basic premise of midwifery. This bill will remove barriers that have allowed women of privilege to make those choices more fully than their peers. I urge you to support HB 2845. Thank you.