



Moonstone Midwifery

Paige Barocca, LDEM, CPM

www.moonstone-midwifery.com

Phone: (443)907-3705

Fax: (443)853-3775

Paige@moonstone-midwifery.com

The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk Chair,
House Health and Government Operations Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 241
6 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401

February 21st, 2025.

Re: House Bill 1251 Health Occupations – Doula and Birth Policy Transparency Act

Position: Favorable

Dear Madam Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee:

My Name is Paige Barocca, and I am a Licensed Direct Entry Midwife (LDEM) in Baltimore, Maryland, on the Direct Entry Midwifery Advisory Committee at the Board of Nursing, and a member of the Association of Independent Midwives of Maryland. I am writing today to ask you to vote favorably on HB1251, a bill that will increase transparency around hospital policies for Maryland families and improve home birth transfer communication.

As a midwife, I am most interested in the part of this bill that requires hospitals to have a policy in place for receiving out-of hospital transfers. In the entire state of Maryland, there is just one hospital (University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center) that has a written policy in place for receiving home birth transfers. They also have regularly scheduled meetings with the local midwives and their staff to discuss recent transfers and how we can improve - on both ends. This open communication has made a world of difference in the quality of care my clients receive in the event of a transfer. This integration of out-of-hospital midwives is crucial for the safety of our clients who choose home birth.

Meanwhile, all LDEMs have written transfer policy agreements that we sign during our initial licensing application. Our local hospitals have nothing to match this transfer agreement. This means that while we are upholding the law following the established guidelines to transfer care, receiving hospitals may turn away our clients, refuse our records, or treat them with hostility if they simply need higher level care or requesting an epidural. It is not uncommon for my clients to choose to drive past several hospitals to go to the one that will treat them with human decency, especially at a time when they already feel defeated for having a change in their birth plans.



Moonstone Midwifery

Paige Barocca, LDEM, CPM

www.moonstone-midwifery.com

Phone: (443)907-3705

Fax: (443)853-3775

Paige@moonstone-midwifery.com

Maternity care in the United States is in crisis. The integration of midwives within our healthcare system, along with the accountability of transparency around hospital policies, may help combat our devastating maternal mortality rate and improve the overall satisfaction of childbirth experiences. A favorable vote for HB1251 is the first step for Maryland to fix our broken healthcare system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warmly,

Paige Barocca

6707 Queens Ferry Rd.

Baltimore, MD 21239

District 43B