

Act Relative to a Board of Registration in Midwifery, SB 2636

To: MA ACOG Fellows

Re: SB 2636, an Act Relative to a Board of Registration in Midwifery

On: 28 May 2008

From: Erin E. Tracy, M.D., M.P.H. (MA ACOG Legislative Committee Chair)

This bill has already passed the MA Senate and the first 2 reads in the House, is slated to come before the House as a 3rd read as early as today. This bill would create a separate board to license midwives in MA. Currently certified nurse midwives (CNMs) are licensed by the MA nursing board, and certified midwives (CMs) and **certified professional midwives aren't granted licenses to practice medicine in this state.** (Certified professional midwives are the term used for what we previously termed "lay midwives", who undergo a certification process through their organization, the North American Registry of Midwives.)

Please contact your representatives today and urge them to defeat this bill at: www.mass.gov/legis/memmenuh.htm

Talking Points [Editor's comments → ** = "Show us the numbers, i.e. proof"]

An individual without a high school degree could be licensed as a CPM if he or she passed the certifying exam, attend 40 deliveries, and participated as the primary attendant in 20, **which ACOG feels**** is not adequate training to be able to practice as a solo licensed practitioner.

According to the bill "a licensed professional midwife may obtain and administer medication and therapeutics and order and interpret tests relevant to the practice of midwifery"...without, **one could certainly argue****, adequate training in pharmacology and pathophysiology

Proponents of the bill have argued this would help curtail costs, liability insurers note the significant increase in premiums midwives would experience if this were to be passed. There is also not evidence having increased autonomy for practitioners will result in cost savings for the Commonwealth, and public health/ safety should be the driving forces of such dramatic changes, not cost containment, regardless.

Proponents of this bill have argued that this would help to regulate a sector of health care delivery that is currently largely unregulated, i.e. CPMs who do home deliveries. **There is no evidence licensing these individuals will result in improved oversight of their clinical activity, or better reporting of outcomes.****

A minority of states currently license CPMs. **One could argue**** that licensing CPMs would be tantamount to the state officially saying these individuals have met rigorous training standards and are adequately trained to provide health care in this state. **It would also potentially encourage CPMs who can't get licenses in other states to move to MA**** and take care of pregnant women, and **possibly**** increase the rate of home deliveries, which are **fraught with the potential for unpredictable obstetrics disasters**** (i.e. shoulder dystocia, postpartum hemorrhage, cord prolapse, amniotic fluid embolism).

The answer to improving access to primary care services does not lie in offering licenses to those who are **not adequately trained**** to provide these services.

Mass. Medical Society and ACOG vehemently oppose this bill. The AMA has filed amicus briefs in other states because of concerns regarding public safety of licensing some of these providers.

The current system, recognized by ACOG, is working well.** The certified nurse midwives who practice in this state provide a valuable service to our patients, and expanding the numbers of those who are **less trained is not necessary, and potentially dangerous****, for our patients and the babies they carry.

The MA ACOG Lobbyists make the following recommendations regarding contacting your legislators:

Dr. Smith is an ob/gyn who lives in Milton, is a member of a group practice with offices in Hanover and delivers babies at South Shore Hospital in Weymouth. Dr. Smith should contact her representative from Milton where she lives and votes, the rep serving Hanover where she has an office, and the rep serving Weymouth where South Shore Hospital is located.

www.mass.gov/legis is a good website that will link a constituent to their state representative along with the rep's e-mail, mailing address and telephone numbers. Some cities and towns have more than one rep so they should feel free to contact all as the case may be. **If ACOG members could report back to you when they receive a response that would be helpful for our purposes so that we can identify those solidly in our corner.** Please let me know if you need anything else. We will be working things on our end in the meantime.

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Maureen also identified key committee members dealing with this issue, so if your representative is listed below it would be particularly helpful if you contact them.

[Petrolati](#) of Ludlow
[Harkins](#) of Needham
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