



ITHACA HEALTH ALLIANCE

IthacaHealth.org

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Ithaca Health Alliance Supports the Midwifery Modernization Act

The Ithaca Health Alliance was founded in 1997. Our mission is to facilitate access to health care for all, with a focus on the needs of the un- and underinsured.

Our organization wholeheartedly supports the Midwifery Modernization Act (Senate Bill S 5007 & Assembly Bill A8117). This bill would allow midwives to practice their safe and evidence-based quality care across New York State without a written practice agreement that all too often hinders access to health care.

Our organization supports a woman's right to be able to pick her provider and the type of birth she wishes to have. Midwives already attend 10% of births in New York State and have lower mortality rates, fewer low birth weight babies, lower caesarean section rates, shorter hospital stays, higher breastfeeding rates, and overall better patient outcomes.

Midwives serve a greater proportion of Medicaid, uninsured, and minority patients than do most physicians. Also more midwives work in rural areas and underserved areas compared to physicians. Too often the Written Practice Agreement (WPA) requirement acts as a barrier to midwifery care, especially in rural areas where there is no physician to sign agreements.

Removing the WPA requirement will promote and enhance access to health care services in New York's rural and lower income urban areas, which have shortages of both primary care and obstetric physicians.

Licensed midwives are key partners in New York's health delivery system, particularly for women's health and maternity care. Midwives need to be recognized as full partners to ensure that women and babies in New York State, including those in rural and underserved areas, have full access to comprehensive and high quality health care.

Sincerely,

Govind Acharya, Secretary
for: Board of Directors, Ithaca Health Alliance