



KEY FACTS ABOUT MIDWIFERY AND THE MIDWIFERY MODERNIZATION ACT New York Legislature Bill S5007/A8117-a

Midwifery care is safe for women.

An overwhelming body of research finds that midwifery care is as safe for women and babies as obstetrical care in low-risk births. Maternal-infant clinical evidence and public health studies all reach the same consensus: Mothers and babies have optimal health outcomes when receiving midwife-led care, which combines appropriate health screening, teaching and counseling, support for physiologic childbirth, and collaboration with physicians for specialty care when necessary.

Midwives are experts in normal birth

The midwifery model of care is based on pregnancy and birth being normal life processes that need to be attended carefully with one-on-one attention, and supported without medical intervention, unless there is a deviation from normal. This contrasts with the model of physicians, who are surgeons trained for medical intervention. The World Health Organization has concluded that about 85% of women can birth normally, even among vulnerable populations.

Midwives are licensed professionals

Midwives as licensed health care providers are subject to oversight and accountability by the NYS Office of Professional Discipline and the NYS Board of Midwifery, and the public has full access to their findings.

Midwives can and do collaborate with obstetricians without a written practice agreement. In the same way that family practice physicians work with OB/GYNs when surgery or specialty care is needed, midwives and physicians have collegial, collaborative relationships without the written practice agreement.

Midwives will continue to have access to malpractice insurance without a WPA. Midwives carry malpractice insurance independent of their relationships with physicians. A number of companies have assured midwives that they will continue to provide such liability insurance coverage once the requirement for the WPA is removed.

This legislation removes the requirement for a WPA - but doctors and midwives can still write them if they so choose. If a midwife is in the employ of a physician, and needs a WPA for admitting privileges at a hospital or for other private employment matters, she and the physician are welcome to create a WPA. This legislation does not prohibit WPAs—it only removes the requirement.