



SUNY DOWNSTATE Medical Center

College of Health Related Professions Midwifery Education Program

Senator Thomas Duane
New York State Senate
430 State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12247

Re: **S5007 LETTER OF SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Duane,

I am writing this letter in support of an amendment to the Midwifery Practice Act, Article 140 of the Education Law which was passed in 1992. The amendment, S5007/A8117, the Midwifery Modernization Act (MMA) will remove the requirement for a written practice agreement (WPA).

Over the 15 years that this has been a legal requirement it has become clear that it is an unnecessary and redundant element in the professional practice of licensed midwives in New York State. Additionally, it has proven to be restrictive of midwives' ability to provide care in certain settings and in certain geographical locales, thus negatively impacting women's access to care and the choices they want but do not have available to them.

The original law was crafted to assure the safety of women cared for by licensed midwives. The education, experience and examination elements of the law and regulations assure the basic competency of a licensed midwife (LM). This law clearly reflects that LMs are independent practitioners, a fact that is recognized by NYSDOH and JACHO, among others, who have a need to consult or refer as any other licensed professional must when encountering a reality beyond their scope of practice.

Over 1300 midwives have been licensed in the state while 15% of vaginal births in the state are attended by midwives. The outcomes of these providers are excellent as evidenced by the research and associated statistics.

The WPA has impaired the choices of women in New York State and denied access to excellent clinical care in areas of limited health care resource availability, i.e., in areas where physicians are scarce who won't sign an agreement or among Medicaid populations.

For all these reasons, and many more, I urge you to support S5007/A8117 to assure access to care and choices for women.

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