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February 22, 2021

Dear Chair Prusak and Members of the House Health Committee,

I am writing you to ask for your support of HB 2388.

As a practicing community midwife for over 40 years, I've seen up close how problems with equitable access to health care has impacted families. The ability to choose care that meets their unique needs is often compromised in Oregon, leaving pregnant women with inadequate or poor care.

Midwifery emphasizes individualized care in pregnancy, labor, birth, and postpartum, and adjusts to the cultural, ethnic, religious, and other unique factors each family presents. Midwifery care is safe in all settings (in homes, birth centers, and hospitals), with excellent outcomes and high patient satisfaction. And midwifery care contributes to Oregon's public health goals of reducing health care inequity and reducing perinatal morbidity and mortality rates.

HB 2388 addresses the issue of equitable access by requiring insurance companies to cover the services of all three types of Oregon licensed midwives, and to engage in fair negotiations of costs involved in community based birth (at home or in birth centers). Currently, about half of Oregon insurers (both private and OHP) provide very limited or no coverage for home birth or birth center midwifery care.

Midwifery care provides large cost savings to insurers and health systems; full utilization of midwifery capacity will extend health care access to under-served areas of the State as well as to challenged populations.

As a practitioner who has dedicated my life to providing excellent care to growing families, and who is passionate about supporting education and choice in health care, I'm asking you to support HB 2388 and move the bill from Committee to a floor vote.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Holly Scholles