

OMC

Oregon Midwifery Council

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March 25, 2023

Dear Chair Nosse and members of the House Committee on Behavioral Health and Health Care,

My name is Silke Akerson and I am the executive director of the Oregon Midwifery Council. The Oregon Midwifery Council represents home birth and birth center midwives in Oregon and promotes family-centered and evidence-based maternity care for all families in our state. I am asking for your support of HB 3298 to provide reliable funding to the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative (OPC) to improve maternal and infant health outcomes in Oregon.

The Oregon Perinatal Collaborative plays an essential role in leading and coordinating physicians, nurses, midwives, hospitals, and health organizations in our work to improve outcomes for mothers, birthing people, and babies in our state. OPC has a proven record of engaging stakeholders and improving outcomes. As a member of the OPC steering committee I have directly experienced the power of this collaborative work to create change.

The Oregon Perinatal Collaborative needs reliable funding from the state of Oregon to reach every birthing hospital in the state and make progress on addressing health disparities. State funding for perinatal collaboratives is a successful model already used in at least 10 states and ensures that this important work does not stop and start with minimal and intermittent grant funding. This work is more urgent than ever with recent reports from the CDC showing that the already high rate of maternal mortality in the US continued to increase significantly in 2021, the most recent year data is available.

Please vote yes on HB 3298 to improve maternal and infant health in Oregon. Thank you for the work you do to support the health of Oregon mothers and babies.

Thank you for your consideration,

Silke Akerson, MPH, CPM, LDM
Oregon Midwifery Council
