

Submitter: Matthew Richardson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB692

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and members of the Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health,

My name is Matthew Richardson, and I am a government affairs manager for the Nurse-Family Partnership home visiting model. As an organization that is deeply involved with supporting maternal health, I am writing to share our support for SB 692.

Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based nurse home visiting program that partners specially-trained registered nurses with expecting parents, starting early in the pregnancy and continuing through the child's second birthday. With the support of an NFP nurse, families experience better pregnancy outcomes, improved child health and development, and greater economic self-sufficiency. Parents, babies, families, and communities all benefit from these proven services.

As a program that works with families over the crucial perinatal period, we know all too well the gaps that exist in support for families. Increasing maternal support during this crucial window leads to decreased rates of low birth weight infants, preterm births, cesarean sections, and epidurals. Additionally, outcomes of such support include increased rates of vaginal delivery and breastfeeding initiation, and improved birth experiences. The involvement of perinatal support is important in reducing disparities in maternal outcomes, providing culturally responsive support, and improving perinatal health equity. Certified Lactation Counselors provide both prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding education and support and improve breastfeeding initiation and duration, exclusive breastfeeding rates, and improved breastfeeding success.

Pregnancy and the first 12 months of life are critical for social emotional and cognitive development and can affect social, educational, and health outcomes across the lifespan. As a program heavily invested in helping families thrive, Nurse-Family Partnership supports SB 692.