



Midwifing safe, quality, loving care

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Omnibus and Birth Center Licensure Bills Introduced Ahead of Black Maternal Health Week

Detroit, MI - April 12, 2024 - Birth Detroit, a nonprofit perinatal health practice led by Black midwives, announced the introduction of the Michigan Omnibus and Birth Center Licensure Bills at its Third Annual State of Birth Justice event, held at Spot Lite Detroit on Friday, April 12, 2024. Birth Detroit, co-founded by a team of four midwives and public health leaders, is opening the first freestanding community birth center in Detroit, and the first of its kind in the state of Michigan.

Since its inception in 2018, Birth Detroit has spearheaded a multi-layered community organizing strategy to enhance access to midwifery care and raise funds for the birth center's establishment. The organization has also taken the lead in developing policies to ensure equitable and sustainable access to midwifery care for all birthing individuals across the state. Nicole White, co-founder of Birth Detroit and founder of MI State of Birth Justice, led a coalition to advocate for the historic introduction of these bills ahead of Black Maternal Health Week.

"All people deserve access to all safe birth options," said White. "Midwifery care is safe birth care and is proven to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes. Midwifery care also embodies the dignity and love that all families deserve. The bills introduced this week will increase access to midwives for all Michiganders."

A Omnibus is a package of bills aimed at improving perinatal health by addressing systemic racism and other social determinants of health. The Michigan Omnibus, introduced by Michigan State Senator Erika Geiss on April 9, 2024, consists of eleven bills designed to dismantle barriers to access to care and promote racial and gender justice in the perinatal period. The Michigan Omnibus addresses various aspects of perinatal care, including data collection, patient protections, malpractice policies, and reimbursement for midwifery care.

Michigan is also one of only nine states that does not license freestanding birth centers, resulting in a lack of Medicaid reimbursement for midwives in these settings. The Birth Center Licensure bill, introduced by Michigan State Representative Laurie Pohutsky on April 10, 2024, seeks to rectify this by ensuring that all midwives in all birth settings are compensated at a fair rate. Through licensure, birth centers will become eligible for reimbursement by Medicaid and private health plans.

For more information about this hallmark legislation visit Birth Detroit birthdetroit.com and MI State of Birth Justice at mistatebirthjustice.com/.

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