JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-837
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING MEDICAID PAYMENT RATES FOR NURSE-MIDWIVES.
Vote Date: 3/7/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/28/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Human Services Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:
This bill would ensure parity of Medicaid payments for nurse-midwives and obstetrician-gynecologists for the same services.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
Roderick Bremby, Commissioner, Department of Social Services: The Department is in favor of equalizing fees paid to midwives and obstetricians, however, due to the financial impact of this legislation, due to additional payments to nurse midwives and the likelihood of nurse practitioners and physician assistants also requesting an increase in their fees, the Department cannot support this legislation at this time.

The Department acknowledges the differences in training, experience, and debt between physicians and nurse midwives but also emphasizes the difference in clinical outcomes. Those served by nurse midwives have outcomes as good, if not superior, to those served by an obstetrician. The Department firmly believes that any increase should be held to a value-based system- and that obstetricians should be held to the same standard.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
Cristin McCarthy Vahey, State Representative 133rd District; in support of this bill and states that Medicare covers CNMs at the same rate as physicians in the state and yet Medicaid, which covers 43% of births in the US, does not.
Madeline Granato, Policy Manager, Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund; in support of this bill, emphasizes that Certified Nurse Midwives are licensed, autonomous health care providers with prescriptive authority in CT. Their role is critical to reproductive health care and extends beyond maternity services. In 2011, certified nurse-midwives gained equitable reimbursement under Medicare as part of the ACA; however, CT midwives’ fees billed to Medicaid are reimbursed at 90% of the physician rate.

Liz Gustafson, Organizer and Volunteer Coordinator, NARAL Pro-Choice CT; states the various services that certified nurse midwives provide outside of maternal care such as reproductive health care, contraceptive coverage, annual women’s exams, STI testing, breastfeeding support, cancer screenings. Studies have shown that women who receive care from CNMs have lower rates of caesarean births, inductions, anesthesia use and have higher rates of breastfeeding.

Linus Chuang, Professor and Network Chair, Western Connecticut Health Network; in support of this bill to ensure access to personalized birthing services for all women and Medicaid reimbursement parity across providers.

Christian Pettker, Associate Professor, Yale School of Medicine; in support of this legislation, stresses that physicians at Yale rely on their midwives in order to be able to care for all of their patients needing care.

Elizabeth Glatfelter, Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner; Midwives achieve similar outcomes as physicians and equal or higher rates of patient satisfaction at a lower net cost to the state.

Jenna LoGiudice, PhD, CNM, RN; States that DSS reimbursement rates for vaginal births is $7,870 and $10,973 for cesarean births; a differential that would save the state $1 million for every 2.1% reduction in cesarean birth rates.

Michelle Telfer, DNP, MPH, CNM; emphasizes that while many midwives are able to serve underserved communities as part of FQHCs, many are not able to fully serve the most vulnerable women due to the low reimbursement rate.

Amanda N. Skinner, MSN, President Planned Parenthood of Southern New England; Planned parenthood stresses that providing equitable reimbursement rates will naturally expand the number of CNMs in the state- there are currently only 208 licensed CNMs

Kristin Nowak, Women’s Health Associates; states that every midwife in CT has an arrangement with a consulting physician, each woman with a midwife attending her birth has her midwife when things go well, and her midwife plus a physician in case of complications.

Adina Chelouche, MD, FACOG; Spoke of her collaborative practice where all laboring patients have access to both a midwife and physician and emphasized that certified nurse midwives are specialists in normal vaginal deliveries and are responsible for most of the labor support, management and deliveries- the physicians are present.

Esla Aminlewis, CNM, MS; in support of this legislation
Masooma Batista; in support of this legislation
Lindsey Bauer; in support of this legislation
Rachel Beauchemin; in support of this legislation
Kristen Becker-Talwalkar; in support of this legislation
Katie Breakell; in support of this legislation
Shandra Craig; in support of this legislation
Christa Esposito; in support of this legislation
Suzannah Holsenbeck Blocker; in support of this legislation
Nancy Burton, MS, CNM, RN; in support of this legislation
Arielle Cheifetz, student Nurse-Midwife; in support of this legislation
Michael Dombrowski, Maternal-Fetal Medicine, Yale University; in support of this legislation
Ash Draper, CNM, APRN; in support of this legislation
Lindsay Collins; in support of this legislation.
Chelsea Durkota, midwifery patient; in support of this legislation
Dr. Emily Fine; in support of this legislation.
Brianne Foley, midwifery patient; in support of this legislation
Katherine Fritts; in support of this legislation
Mary Gauthier; in support of this legislation.
Margaret Holland; in support of this legislation
Ashley Kenney; in support of this legislation
Sydney Kessing; in support of this legislation
Michelle Killingsworth, CNM; in support of this legislation
Colleen Leonhard; in support of this legislation
Grace Lessard, BSN, RN, SNM; in support of this legislation.
Jenna LoGiudice, PhD; in support of this legislation
Vicki Nolan Marnin, Certified Nurse Midwife; in support of this legislation
Jenny Martinez; in support of this legislation.
Caitlin McKee; in support of this legislation.
Jennifer McTiernan, Esq; in support of this legislation
Krista Mehlhaff, physician fellow Yale School of Medicine; in support of this legislation
Ashley Minihan; in support of this legislation
Gina Novick, PhD, CNM; in support of this legislation.
Marannie Rawls Philippe; in support of this legislation
Andrea Polaski; in support of this legislation
Kiersten N. Rooney, Student Nurse Midwife; in support of this legislation
Sierra Shaffer; in support of this legislation
Jessica Skrinar, midwifery patient; in support of this legislation
Anna Katerina Sfakianaki, MD, MPH; in support of this bill.
Margaret Streten; in support of this bill.
Jaimie-Lynne St. Onge; in support of this legislation
Dorothy Vecchio; in support of this legislation

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

No opposing testimony was submitted, with the exception of the Department of Social Services.

Reported by: Kayleigh Royston Date: 03/15/2019