



POSITION STATEMENT

Sustainable Reimbursement for Midwifery-Led Birth Center Care

In accordance with multiple federal initiatives, and as a concerted action to improve perinatal mortality through the appropriate utilization of birth center and midwifery services, the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC) officially recognizes and calls for the following:

Wherein we recognize:

- The United States ranks 67th in the world for maternal mortality. This rate is still increasing.
- The United States stands in 54th place globally for neonatal mortality.
- Mortality rates for BIPOC birthing people are significantly higher than their demographically-matched white counterparts.
- The United States is number one in spending on healthcare.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends midwives as an evidence-based approach to reduce maternal mortality, however midwifery is being underutilized in the US.
- 75% of births occurring in industrialized nations outside the United States are attended by midwives while only 12% of births are attended by midwives within the United States.
- The largest barriers to vastly increased access to midwifery are the systematic unsustainably poor reimbursement of midwives and birth centers or their exclusion entirely
- There is a clear and direct correlation between midwives acting as the first line of care providers during pregnancy and birth, and superior outcomes including decreased perinatal and neonatal mortality, reduced medical interventions, and improved experience.

We therefore support the following:

- Separate professional and facility services reimbursement for each patient cared for by a provider including the birthing person and the baby.
- Maternity and newborn services shall be reimbursed at the same rate, regardless of licensed provider type or location.

- Maternity and newborn services shall be reimbursed at the same rate, regardless of state recognized facility type.
- Inclusion and reimbursement without discrimination of all licensed midwifery providers by every insurance plan, public or private.
- Standardized facility code sets common to all maternity and newborn services, regardless of location, to mitigate misuse of insurance dollars.
- National recognition of freestanding birth centers as defined by the AABC Standards for Birth Centers and accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Birth Centers (CABC) as the first line of care.
- National recognition of midwives as primary care providers for pregnancy and birth.

The AABC states, unequivocally, that midwives and birth centers are the single most underutilized resource in ending the maternal health crisis and bringing the United States back into the top-tier for its care of mothers, birthing people, infants, and families.

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