

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support of legalizing Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) in New York state. I am the mother of one child and currently pregnant with a second. I desire to have more choices for my maternal care.

On December 7th, 2023, I had my first child at Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester. I had an uncomplicated birth that could have been more comfortable and safe if I had the opportunity to birth in my own home. Because I had limited options for maternal care, I had to drive 35 minutes to the hospital where I only saw the hospital midwife at check in and then not again until I was crowning. The hospital midwife barely made it in time to assist with my birth. I did it mostly on my own with my husband and doula. In fact, the hospital staff were more a hinderance than a help as they interrupted my birth as they were rushing in at the last second.

I had to stay for at least 24 hours because of hospital policy. I was very uncomfortable staying in a hospital with sick people with my brand new baby. The food was absolutely horrible, and I was ravenous having just given birth. I barely got any sleep on that crucial first night because of the various checkins and also because I was uncomfortable not being at home.

There was nothing done for me in the hospital that a registered CPM could not have done for me in the comfort of my own home where I had access to healthy food and would not be exposed to pathogens in the hospital setting. The stress of the hospital environment also contributed to mental health struggles post-partum.

I am glad that hospitals exist for births that need c-sections or other emergent care. However, for the majority of births such as mine, a home birth with a CPM would have been safer for my physical, mental, and emotional health and safer for my new baby.

My request of the New York State Legislature is that you legalize CPMS to provide more options for maternal health care, especially for rural communities such as my own. As a developed country, there is no reason we should have limited options for our health care during such as vulnerable and life-changing time as giving birth to our babies.

Sincerely,

Sarah Wilhelm