



UMA Legislative Alert

January 17, 2005

Direct-Entry Midwife Bill on Agenda for House Health and Human Services Committee

The Direct-entry Midwife Bill (HB25) will be discussed at this Thursday's (Jan. 20th) Health & Human Services Committee meeting scheduled for 8 am in Rm.W125 (West Bldg).

We have lined up three members of ACOG, an emergency room physician, and the chair of the Legislative Committee to present our position on HB25 to the committee.

At this point, we anticipate focusing on the following points:

1. This is not a turf battle—this is an issue of public health and safety as well as an issue of societal cost when a homebirth goes awry.
2. Homebirths are already legal under Utah law.
3. No amount of training is sufficient to perform a complicated birth at home.
4. Regulation can help make homebirths safer, but this bill doesn't do it, primarily because licensure is not mandatory. This means that midwives can choose to be licensed or not. Moreover, those that are licensed suffer no ill effect if their license is ever taken away. They can just go back to what they have always done.
5. Giving licensed midwives access to anti-hemorrhagic medications is the wrong thing to do because it makes it more likely that midwives will try and manage complicated situations at home that should be immediately transferred for medical care.
6. There is a high cost to the medical system, Medicaid, and society as a whole when high-risk pregnancies occur at home or emergency medical transfers are delayed.

It is critically important that we communicate these ideas civilly and professionally with legislators on this and all other issues. The wrong tone could create a huge sympathy backlash for a perceived "David" fighting against a perceived "Goliath." Remember, this hearing is but the first step of the process, so there is no need to be anything other than polite even if committee members disagree.

We absolutely welcome and encourage any and all who would like to come to the Committee as a tangible showing of the medical community's opposition to HB25.

We also encourage those of you who are constituents of the following committee members to contact them and ask them to oppose HB25:

Brad Last--Washington (voted against last year's bill)
Paul Ray--Davis (new legislator)
Gregg Buxton--Weber (voted for bill)
Ronda Menlove--Cache/Box Elder (new legislator)
Becky Lockhart--Utah (voted for bill)
Steve Mascaro--Salt Lake (voted for bill)
Pat Jones--Salt Lake (voted for bill)
David Litvack--Salt Lake (voted for bill)

If this bills passes committee, we will need to get our message out to all 75 members of the House.

UMA Legislative Action Center

Remember to check out UMA's new Legislative Action Center on our website. Visit www.utahmed.org and look for the links to the Legislative Action Center, where you can find out who your representatives are and easily send them an email message or find out about other issues UMA is following this year.