

April 15, 2009

Honorable Norman Coleman  
320 Senate Hart Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coleman:

I am in the privileged position of being a labor and deliver nurse at St. Joseph's Hospital for the last twenty-six years. I have the opportunity to work with residents, family practice physicians, obstetricians and certified nurse-midwives. I am writing to express strong support of the "Midwifery Care Access and Reimbursement Equity Act of 2009," (S. 662). I support this legislation because it would address the inequitable reimbursement under Medicare for midwifery services, thereby improving access to obstetrical and gynecological care for many women. On a personal level I can tell you that the nurse-midwives I work with provide the most professional and comprehensive care for their patients. They sit with their patients in labor and offer very personalized care for the families they serve. Their outcomes are just as good as the physicians and sometimes their cesarean rate is even lower.

In the state of Minnesota, approximately 9 percent of all spontaneous deliveries are attended by certified nurse-midwives. Over 150 CNMs practice at over 40 different locations throughout the state, including the Twin Cities, Rochester, Alexandria, Cambridge, Duluth, Fairbault, Fergus Falls/Perham, Long Prairie, Morris, Stillwater, Wabasha, Winona, Worthington, Hutchinson and Waconia.

**S. 662 has a plethora of support and no opposition.** In its June 2002 report to Congress, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) unanimously recommended that the percentage of part B reimbursement for services provided by midwives be increased. MedPAC also stated that research shows the quality of care and outcomes for services provided by CNMs are at least comparable to other health professionals providing obstetrical and gynecological services. In addition to MedPAC, many other health profession organizations such as the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Nursing Association (ANA), the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), and the National Perinatal Association (NPA) have signed letters of support for our bill.

Furthermore, you would be pleased to learn that this legislation already passed in the House of Representatives in August 2007 as apart of the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (HR 3162). **CBO scored the provision as having no cost.** Unfortunately, the Senate failed to act on the measure.

In summary, this legislation will improve access to obstetrical and gynecological care for many women in our state. It has broad support, no opposition, and is budget-neutral. As a constituent and a nurse, I ask you to cosponsor this legislation. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact our ACNM Federal Representative, Patrick Cooney, at 202-347-0034.

Sincerely,

Imanurse Forreal, RN  
St. Joseph's Hospital  
Labor and Delivery Unit  
1853 Highland Parkway  
Saint Paul, MN 55116  
651.493.8276  
mye-mail@gmail.com