July 26, 2022

Dear (Legislator Name):

I am your constituent and care deeply about the safety of mothers and babies. Virginia Licensed Midwives currently are not permitted to possess, prescribe, or administer potentially life-saving medications within their scope of practice. This needs to change! I ask for your support for legislation allowing Licensed Midwives the right to provide the medications within their scope of practice.

# Maternity Care Deserts

Maternity care deserts are areas where there is limited or no access to maternity health care services. According to a 2020 report published by the March of Dimes, **47% of Virginia counties are Maternity Care Deserts** (March of Dimes, 2020).

# Safety & Ethics

Maternal mortality in the United States is higher than all other highly industrialized countries. More than 700 people die each year in the United States from childbirth-related causes, and it is estimated that approximately 60% of those deaths are preventable (Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA), 2018). Hemorrhage is the leading cause of maternal death worldwide (James, 2022), and there are basic medications Licensed Midwives can administer to prevent or treat postpartum hemorrhage. Access to life-saving medications is a human right and is essential to safe practice in all birth settings.

# Strain on Hospital Systems

Families who choose to give birth at home or at a freestanding birth center ease the strain on hospital systems. It is unnecessary to burden hospitals with the responsibility of providing basic medications that could safely be administered outside the hospital setting.

# Scope of Practice

Licensed Midwives in Virginia are restricted from administering the medications that are within their scope of practice\*. Virginia is one of only two states that license midwives yet restrict them from accessing these medications. Providers should be able to work within their full scope of practice.

# Workarounds

Families must jump through numerous hoops to gain access to the medications that make their birth safer. Some must drive over two hours to see a physician who would be willing to prescribe medications. Some must go to the hospital within 2 hours of their baby’s birth so that their baby can receive a potentially life-saving vitamin K injection or erythromycin eye ointment that can prevent permanent blindness due to maternal infection. Some people must choose between having to endure the pain of being sutured without the use of local anesthetic or risking permanent damage to their body by not having those lacerations repaired properly. Some must self-administer prescribed medications, while their Licensed Midwife stands by, unable to assist them due to an outdated law.

I urge you to support Virginia Licensed Midwives and the people they serve. This outdated law needs to be changed to reflect the scope of practice of Licensed Midwives, and Virginia families deserve these life-saving medications wherever they choose to give birth.

Sincerely,

(Your Name and Signature)