

February 12th, 2021

RE: Support of SB174

My name is Tarena Sisk. I am licensed as an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) and Certified Nurse-midwife (CNM) in Kansas. I also became licensed as a Certified Nurse Independent (CNM-I) under the Kansas Board of Healing Arts in 2020.

After graduating in 2011 with my master's degree, I began practicing in rural southeast Kansas in a physician owned OB/GYN clinic. 10 years later and after delivering over 1,000 babies in the community, lowering the hospital c-section rate from over 30% to less than 11%, I decided to open my own freestanding birth center and clinic to better serve women and their families. Initially, the physician I worked with agreed to continue to collaborate with me, but then realized that I could potentially take some of his business. Instead of continuing to partner with me, he decided he no longer wanted to work with me, essentially leaving me unable to practice because of the requirements to have a physician sign the collaborative practice agreement. At this point, I had already invested thousands of dollars into a new business that I could not legally practice in without finding another physician to sign this agreement. Where I live and practice is a small town with only two OB/GYN physicians. They work in the same practice and it would be unlikely for one to sign without the other. To practice, I would need to move my entire family, uproot our lives, and recover financially from a business that I had already invested my heart and soul into.

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This requirement for the collaborative practice agreement needs to be removed. Educated, APRNs are unable to practice in Kansas because of this unnecessary requirement. APRNs are forced to move out of Kansas, change practices, or profession because physicians are not willing to sign this agreement.

I did receive the CNM-I license in 2020. This was passed in 2016 by the KS legislature so that CNMs could be partially independent. Unfortunately, as much as I want it to work it regulation by the Board of Healing Arts has been very problematic. A midwifery council was appointed to suggest regulations, physicians were appointed to the council that had never worked with midwives and had no understanding of scope of practice or education. This led to further restrictions on midwifery practice in the regulations and no consensus for over 4 years. The legislation restricts a midwife's ability to do gynecological care which is over 50% of a midwife's normal practice. This type of care still requires a collaborative practice agreement. CNM-I still have to be licensed by the Board of Nursing. This requires payment to two boards, dual regulation, and dual renewals. The midwifery council or CNM's do not have a vote on the Kansas Board of Healing Arts and cannot say what ultimately happens to the profession. Other problems have been insurance companies not providing malpractice for CNM-I, pharmacies not understanding the license, insurance companies not credentialing CNM-I in network.

Please support SB 174 to eliminate unnecessary requirements. 24 other states have already done so and these states have better access to healthcare, improved outcomes and have not compromised safety. APRNs provide safe, quality healthcare. Let consumers choose who they want to see for their healthcare.

Sincerely,

Tarena Sisk, MSN, CNM, CNM-I

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