



January 30, 2024

Chairman Sutton and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2478, adding “maternity center” to the definition of “healthcare provider” for purposes of the healthcare provider insurance availability act.

At Trust Women, we believe that all people should have meaningful access to the health care they need, when they need it. We believe health care should never be viewed in a vacuum: any community’s healthcare needs will be as unique and varied as the individuals who make up that community. Therefore, the best health care outcomes are those that happen in places with access to the greatest concentrations and variety of health care providers.

We agree with the bill’s sponsors that including accredited maternity centers in the spectrum of health care available to Kansans is a much-needed step. In fact, [The March of Dimes 2022 report on Maternity Care Deserts Across the U.S.](#) suggests that the inclusion of non-hospital or small clinical settings are a key factor in reducing the impact of these critical healthcare gaps in our state. The report finds that over half of all Kansas counties are either a maternity care desert¹ (45% of counties) or have critically low access to reproductive health care services (24% of counties).

Among other recommendations, the report includes expanding access to and reimbursing for midwifery care, doula care, and evidence-based telehealth services for pregnant and postpartum people. We believe that formal inclusion of maternity centers in the Healthcare Provider Insurance Availability Act will have a positive impact on the ability of providers to start and maintain telehealth and brick-and-mortar clinics, especially in underserved areas of the state.

Taking care of pregnant people and their families before, during, and after pregnancy will require a different understanding of how people access health care than the old model of health care consolidation and lean staffing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 2478.

Sincerely,

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Schantz Jones-Berg' and the second is 'Rebecca Toy'.

Co-Executive Directors
Trust Women Foundation

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¹ Maternity care deserts are defined by the March of Dimes as counties with no hospitals offering obstetric care, no in-county OB-GYNs or family physicians who provide obstetric care, and any proportion of women 18-64 without health insurance (<https://www.peridev.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/kansas/maternity-care-deserts>)