

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2SHB 1773

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Health Care, February 25, 2014

**Title:** An act relating to the practice of midwifery.

**Brief Description:** Concerning the practice of midwifery.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Morrell, Rodne, Cody, Green, Ryu, Liias, Farrell and Santos).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 2/17/14, 91-5.

**Committee Activity:** Health Care: 2/24/14, 2/25/14 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Becker, Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Pedersen, Ranking Member; Angel, Bailey, Cleveland, Keiser and Parlette.

**Staff:** Mich'l Needham (786-7442)

**Background:** A licensed midwife renders medical care for compensation to a woman during prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum stages. In order to be licensed, a midwife must:

- have a high school degree;
- be at least 21 years of age;
- possess a certificate or diploma from a midwifery program;
- obtain a minimum of three years of midwifery training;
- for a student midwife during training, undertake the care of at least 50 women in each of the prenatal, intrapartum, and early postpartum period;
- observe an additional 50 women in the intrapartum period; and
- pass an examination.

**Summary of Bill:** The practice of midwifery includes rendering medical aid to a woman or to her newborn up to two weeks of age.

The Secretary of the Department of Health must write rules to bridge the gap between requirements of national certification of certified professional midwives and state requirements for licensure for licensed midwives.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Licensed midwives must renew their license according to the following requirements:

- completion of a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education every three years;
- proof of participation in a Washington State coordinated quality improvement program; and
- proof of participation in data submission on perinatal outcomes to a national or state research organization.

The Secretary must write rules regarding the renewal process and the process for verification of the third-party data submission.

Midwives may delegate to a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse tasks that do not exceed the nurse's education.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: This was brought forward by the midwives to ensure they have continuing education requirements, and to allow them to continue taking care of mothers and newborns for the first two weeks after birth. It will also allow the national certificate holders to work here. This will expand the capacity to provide care, ensure quality, and allow nurses to take direction from the midwives. The care of the newborn reflects the recommendations of the sunrise review. Many midwives already voluntarily submit data on birth outcomes. The data submission requirement will help ensure there is enough data to demonstrate outcomes.

OTHER: We respect the care that midwives provide mothers and their newborns. We just want to stress that the newborns should also see a medical doctor in the first weeks of life to ensure formal care is initiated in areas such as immunizations.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Morrell, prime sponsor; Valerie Sasson, Audrey Levine, Midwives' Assn. of WA State.

OTHER: Sydney Zvara, Assn. of WA Healthcare Plans.