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**SENATE BILL 5256**

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**State of Washington 66th Legislature 2019 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Keiser, Saldaña, and Randall

AN ACT Relating to the use of the term birth center; amending RCW 18.46.010; adding a new section to chapter 18.46 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  The legislature finds that birth centers offer a unique model of care with specific protocols for successful maternal and infant health outcomes. Recent credible evidence indicates that when women receive care from a birth center they achieve better birth outcomes at an overall lower cost. This includes lower cesarean delivery rates and higher vaginal birth after cesarean delivery rates. Delivery expenditures and total expenditures for infants in their first year are on average fifteen to twenty-one percent lower for women who received birth center care compared to women who received care from other medicaid providers. This evidence compels the legislature to clarify that it is not appropriate for facilities to use the term "birth center" generically unless they provide the unique model of care and follow the accepted birth center guidelines.

**Sec.**  RCW 18.46.010 and 2000 c 93 s 30 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) "Birthing center," ((~~or~~)) "childbirth center," or "birth center" means any health facility((~~, not part of a hospital or in a hospital,~~)) that provides facilities and staff to support a birth service ((~~to~~)) exclusively for low-risk maternity clients((~~: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That this chapter shall not apply to any hospital approved by the American College of Surgeons, American Osteopathic Association, or its successor~~)) in accordance with the midwifery and wellness model of care as delineated by national birth center standards.

(2) "Department" means the state department of health.

(3) "Low-risk" means normal, uncomplicated prenatal course as determined by adequate prenatal care and prospects for a normal uncomplicated birth as defined by reasonable and generally accepted criteria of maternal and fetal health.

(4) "Person" means any individual, firm, partnership, corporation, company, association, or joint stock association, and the legal successor thereof.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 18.46 RCW to read as follows:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, a facility may not use the term "birthing center," "childbirth center," or "birth center" unless the facility is duly licensed under this chapter.

(2) Any facility using the term "birthing center," "childbirth center," or "birth center" on or before the effective date of this section that does not meet the requirements of this chapter must discontinue use of the term "birthing center," "childbirth center," or "birth center" upon voluntary rebranding or within five years of the effective date of this section, whichever occurs sooner.

**--- END ---**