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HOUSE BILL 2174

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State of Washington                      55th Legislature                      1997 Regular Session

By Representatives Backlund, Dyer and Skinner

Read first time 02/25/97. Referred to Committee on Health Care.

1            AN ACT Relating to licensed midwives; amending RCW 18.50.005 and  
2 18.50.010; adding new sections to chapter 18.50 RCW; and creating a new  
3 section.

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

5            NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 1.**    The legislature finds that there is  
6 ambiguity as to what the role of licensed midwives should be.

7            It is the intent of the legislature to clarify the understanding of  
8 the original law that licensed midwives for care of low-risk maternal  
9 clients only.

10           NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 2.**    A new section is added to chapter 18.50 RCW  
11 to read as follows:

12           The secretary shall adopt rules defining low-risk maternal clients  
13 and establishing practice standards for midwives. These standards  
14 shall not be less than those adopted for childbirth centers under  
15 chapter 18.46 RCW.

16           **Sec. 3.**    RCW 18.50.005 and 1991 c 3 s 102 are each amended to read  
17 as follows:

1 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in  
2 this section apply throughout this chapter:

3 (1) "Department" means the department of health.

4 (2) "Secretary" means the secretary of health.

5 (3) "Midwife" means a midwife licensed under this chapter.

6 (4) "Physician" means a physician licensed under chapter 18.57 or  
7 18.71 RCW.

8 (5) "Practice of midwifery" means providing medical aid service for  
9 a fee or compensation to low-risk maternal clients as defined by the  
10 secretary by rule under section 2 of this act.

11 **Sec. 4.** RCW 18.50.010 and 1991 c 3 s 103 are each amended to read  
12 as follows:

13 Any person shall be regarded as practicing midwifery within the  
14 meaning of this chapter who shall render medical aid for a fee or  
15 compensation to a woman during prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum  
16 stages or who shall advertise as a midwife by signs, printed cards, or  
17 otherwise. Nothing shall be construed in this chapter to prohibit  
18 gratuitous services. It shall be the duty of a midwife to consult  
19 ((with)) and refer the patient to a physician whenever there are  
20 significant deviations from normal in either the mother or the infant.  
21 The physician may refer the patient back to the midwife.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** A new section is added to chapter 18.50 RCW  
23 to read as follows:

24 A licensed midwife who provides services to a person who is not a  
25 low-risk client as defined by the secretary under section 2 of this act  
26 is ineligible for coverage under the joint underwriting association  
27 established in chapter 48.87 RCW.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** A new section is added to chapter 18.50 RCW  
29 to read as follows:

30 To knowingly treat a person who is not a low-risk client as defined  
31 by the secretary under section 2 of this act constitutes unprofessional  
32 conduct for the purposes of chapter 18.130 RCW.

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