
SENATE BILL 5256

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Senators Keiser, Saldaña, and Randall

1 AN ACT Relating to the use of the term birth center; amending RCW
2 18.46.010; adding a new section to chapter 18.46 RCW; and creating a
3 new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that birth centers
6 offer a unique model of care with specific protocols for successful
7 maternal and infant health outcomes. Recent credible evidence
8 indicates that when women receive care from a birth center they
9 achieve better birth outcomes at an overall lower cost. This includes
10 lower cesarean delivery rates and higher vaginal birth after cesarean
11 delivery rates. Delivery expenditures and total expenditures for
12 infants in their first year are on average fifteen to twenty-one
13 percent lower for women who received birth center care compared to
14 women who received care from other medicaid providers. This evidence
15 compels the legislature to clarify that it is not appropriate for
16 facilities to use the term "birth center" generically unless they
17 provide the unique model of care and follow the accepted birth center
18 guidelines.

19 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.46.010 and 2000 c 93 s 30 are each amended to
20 read as follows:

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

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

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

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

18 NEW SECTION. Sec. 3. A new section is added to chapter 18.46
19 RCW to read as follows:

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

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

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