**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND CHAPTER 89, TITLE 44 OF THE 1976 CODE, RELATING TO THE BIRTHING CENTER LICENSURE ACT, BY ADDING ARTICLE 3, TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL SHALL PROMULGATE REGULATIONS TO INTEGRATE BIRTHING CENTERS AND LICENSED MIDWIVES INTO PERINATAL CARE SERVICES, AND TO DEFINE NECESSARY TERMS.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 89, Title 44 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“ARTICLE 3

Perinatal Integration

Section 44‑89‑300. For the purposes of this article:

(1) ‘Integrate’ means to facilitate the full exercise of scope of practice, autonomy, self-regulation, collaboration, and a smooth transition between licensed midwives or birthing centers and hospitals that provide perinatal services. ‘Integrate’ does not mean to supervise licensed midwives or birthing centers.

(2) ‘Licensed midwife’ means an individual licensed by the department who provides services for the purpose of giving primary assistance in the birth process.

(3) ‘Perinatal care services’ means services offered pursuant to Regulation 61-16, Minimum Standards for Licensing Hospitals and Institutional General Infirmaries, Section 1300.

Section 44‑89‑310. The department shall promulgate regulations to integrate birthing centers and licensed midwives into perinatal care services. At a minimum, the department shall address the following:

(1) access to physician‑to‑provider consultation;

(2) policies and protocols concerning the transfer of a pregnant woman from a licensed midwife or birthing center to a hospital within a fifty-mile radius that has an inpatient perinatal care services designation, pursuant to Regulation 61-16, Section 1306;

(3) access to professional continuing education relating to safe transfers and the escalation of care; and

(4) the collection of data on transfer outcomes to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of transfer of care from a licensed midwife or birthing center to a hospital.

Section 44‑89‑320. Nothing in this article shall be construed to require:

(1) the department to promulgate regulations to restrict the scope of practice permitted under current licenses issued by the department, or change existing licensure requirements; or

(2) a hospital or birthing center to change the way that it creates or maintains credentialing and admitting privileges.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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