

Midwifery Working Group

May 2, 2024 | 3:00-4:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Sera Gadbois, Carolyn Greenfield, Daileann Hemmings, Selina Osei, Amy Romano, Michelle Telfer

Members absent: Cynthia Bean, Lucinda Canty, Anna Cobler, Kara Crawford, Christy D'Aquila, SciHonor Devotion, Tonia Douglas, Camille Grant, Dawn Havener, Priya Morganstern, Christina Mukon, Gengi Proteau, Kim Sandor, Fatmata Williams

DPH: Melia Allan, Dante Costa

Introduction

- Dante welcomed everyone to the meeting, the April minutes will be approved when the group has a quorum

Guest Speaker: Katherine Rushfirth

- Dante introduced Katherine Rushfirth at Boston's Neighborhood Birth Center
- Katherine shared a video on the birth center: [You Were Welcomed with Love #ReimagineBirth](#)
Katherine shared information about the mission and values of the Neighborhood Birth Center in Boston, the limited access to community birth in Massachusetts, as well as the Massachusetts policy context – the regulatory barriers that make it difficult to open and sustain a birth center, the NBC's advocacy for reproductive justice in Massachusetts,
 - They have a supportive transfer hospital – Boston Medical Center
- Her presentation focused on the equitable and fair reimbursement of all midwives and birth centers

Q&A Session

- The Neighborhood Birth Center is not yet open, but it is anticipated to be the first birth center run by women of color in the region – anticipated to open in late 2025/2026
 - One of the things slowing it down is they must construct a building from the ground up, in part due to stringent regulations
- The group discussed the impact that regulators have in the opening and maintaining of birth centers in New England
- Katherine elaborated on insurance equity, and brought up the idea that birth centers may be budget neutral with respect to Medicaid reimbursement
- The group had a discussion of the high costs of mandatory malpractice insurance
- Members asked Katherine about the discussions around CPM licensure in Massachusetts midwifery circles

- There is currently a bill in the legislature that is supported by the Mass DPH, ACNM, and Mass ACOG
 - Mass Midwife Alliance did not introduce this bill – there are CPM allies, but it was more consumer-driven as an initiative
- Katherine spoke about how historically midwives are positioned as a cheaper alternative to hospital births, but this is harmful – she hopes to have CNMs, CMs, and CPMs to be all paid the same
 - Katherine highlighted the importance of CPMs in birth centers due to their homebirth experience
- Amy brought up the importance of retraining the midwifery workforce in this region for birth center work/out-of-hospital birth
 - Katherine mentioned a partnership with other birth centers around the country, where midwives could get funding to travel to for training
- Dante spoke about midwives who have experience but may not have their CPM, and asked about the intended approach in Massachusetts for direct entry midwives who may not have access to a MEAC-accredited school
- Members compared the maternal care situation in Massachusetts with the landscape in Connecticut

Closing

- Katherine shared her email for further questions: Katherine@neighborhoodbirthcenter.org
- Dante adjourned the meeting at 3:59