

Resolution F - Expanding Maternal Health Services in Rural Michigan to Include Osteopathic Physicians

**SUBMITTED TO:** Michigan Osteopathic Association  
**SUBMITTED BY:** Council of Interns and Residents  
**REFERRED TO:** Professional Affairs Committee  
**RECOMMENDATION:** Support with Edits  
**SUBJECT:** Expanding Maternal Health Services in Rural Michigan to Include Osteopathic Physicians  
**ACTION TAKEN BY MOA:** Adopted as Amended

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1 **Whereas**, maternal and infant health outcomes in the United States, including Michigan, are  
2 significantly worse than in many other developed nations; and

3 **Whereas**, access to maternal healthcare in rural Michigan is severely limited; and

4 **Whereas**, in 2021 7.6% of babies in Michigan are born to women residing in rural counties, yet  
5 only 4.8% of maternity care providers practice in these areas, indicating a critical shortage of  
6 maternal healthcare professionals; and

7 **Whereas**, studies indicate that adverse pregnancy outcomes—including hypertensive disorders of  
8 pregnancy, preterm birth, and low birth weight—complicate nearly one in five live births in the  
9 United States, with a rising trend of multiple adverse outcomes in recent years; and

10 **Whereas**, recent efforts have focused on expanding midwifery services and doula\* support to  
11 address maternal care disparities, particularly among minority and underserved populations; and

12 **Whereas**, while doulas and midwives play a vital role in maternal health, unsupported and  
13 unregulated midwifery practices may pose risks in complex obstetric cases that require the  
14 expertise of licensed physicians; and

15 **Whereas**, integrating osteopathic physicians into rural maternal health initiatives, including  
16 exposure to osteopathic manipulative medicine, will enhance access to evidence-based obstetric  
17 care, ensure the management of high-risk pregnancies, and improve overall maternal and infant  
18 health outcomes; now, therefore, be it

19 **RESOLVED**, that the Michigan Osteopathic Association advocate for the expansion of maternal  
20 health services in rural Michigan to include osteopathic physicians, ensuring a collaborative and  
21 multidisciplinary approach to maternal care; and, be it further

22 **RESOLVED**, that MOA encourages state policymakers, healthcare institutions, and community  
23 organizations to promote funding and policy initiatives that support the inclusion of osteopathic  
24 physicians in rural maternity care programs.

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\*Doula is defined as “a non-medical professional who provides guidance for the service of others and who supports another person through a significant health-related experience, such as childbirth, miscarriage, induced abortion or stillbirth, as well as non-reproductive experiences such as dying. A doula might also provide support to the client's partner, family, and friends”.

Midwifery is defined as “skilled, knowledgeable and compassionate care for childbearing women, newborn infants and families across the continuum from prepregnancy, pregnancy, birth, postpartum and the early weeks of life”.

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<sup>1</sup> Wendling A, Taglione V, Rezmer R, Lwin P, Frost J, Terhune J, Kerver J. Access to maternity and prenatal care services in rural Michigan. *Birth*. 2021 Dec;48(4):566-573. doi: 10.1111/birt.12563. Epub 2021 Jun 18. PMID: 34145616.

<sup>2</sup> Freaney, Priya M et al. “Temporal Trends in Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes in Birthing Individuals Aged 15 to 44 Years in the United States, 2007 to 2019.” *Journal of the American Heart Association* vol. 11,11 (2022): e025050. doi:10.1161/JAHA.121.025050

<sup>3</sup> March of Dimes. "Maternity Care Deserts Report: Michigan." *PeriStats*, 2024, <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/michigan/maternity-care-deserts>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2025.

<sup>4</sup> Michigan Office of the Governor. "Whitmer Signs Bills Expanding Reproductive Freedom, Reducing Barriers to Affording Contraception." *Michigan.gov*, 21 Jan. 2025, <https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/news/press-releases/2025/01/21/whitmer-signs-bills-expanding-reproductive-freedom-reducing-barriers-to-affording-contraception>. Accessed 10 Feb. 2025.