

March 20, 2009

The Honorable Patty Murray  
U.S. Senate  
173 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

On behalf of the Center for Women's Health at Evergreen, an ob/gyn practice in Kirkland, we are writing to express strong support the "**Midwifery Care Access and Reimbursement Equity Act of 2009,**" (S. 662). We are a practice of five obstetricians/gynecologists, five certified nurse-midwives, a physician's assistant, a naturopathic physician, and two women's health care nurse practitioners. We provide both alternative and traditional health care to women from puberty to menopause. We support this legislation because it would address the inequitable reimbursement under Medicare for midwifery services, thereby improving access to obstetrical and gynecological care for many women.

Certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) attend more than 10% of all spontaneous vaginal deliveries in the Washington State. In our practice, the midwives deliver approximately 35 babies per month at Evergreen Hospital, as well as provide primary women's health care services to many of our patients who are poor, ethnically diverse, disabled, and underserved.

In its June 2002 report to Congress, the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) unanimously recommended that the percentage of part B reimbursement for services provided by midwives be increased. MedPAC also stated that research shows the quality of care and outcomes for services provided by CNMs are at least comparable to other health professionals providing obstetrical and gynecological services.

As you may know, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has supported this legislation, as well as the National Perinatal Association (NPA). We strongly support passage of this important women's health legislation during the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress and ask that you show your support by cosponsoring S. 662.

Sincerely,

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Kathryn Arendt, MD

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Michele Delorit, MD

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Karen Wells, MD

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Guoli Johnston, MD

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Susan Eagan, MD