

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1373

Title: AN ACT REQUIRING THE LICENSURE OF LACTATION CONSULTANTS.

Vote Date: 3/12/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/3/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee.

REASONS FOR BILL:

The bill would create a licensure program for International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs). To receive this license, an individual must have certification from the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) or any successor to it. The bill prohibits unlicensed people from practicing lactation consulting for compensation as well as using the title "lactation consultant". However, the bill does not prohibit unlicensed people meeting specified criteria from practicing lactation consulting or providing related services as long as they do not refer to themselves as "lactation consultant". In addition, the bill specifies the conditions under which the Department of Public Health (DPH) can exercise disciplinary action on licensees and states that no new board for lactation consultants is created.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Merrilee Gober, National Lactation Consultant Alliance (NLCA):

Ms. Gober believes that a licensing law is necessary for IBCLC clinical services to be legally recognized. She adds that the bill should not affect what any others in the lactation field are legally allowed to do. She mentioned a malpractice case in New York to highlight the need for licensure as families need qualified care that they can trust.

Marsha Walker, President, National Lactation Consultant Alliance (NLCA):

Ms. Walker pointed out that in 2011 the U.S. surgeon general called for licensure of IBCLCs.

The following submitted testimony similar to that expressed above in support of this bill:

- Amy Gagliardi, IBCLC, Community Health Center Inc.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Cody Cuni, IBCLC:

Ms. Cuni stated that there are at least twenty-eight lesser credentials in lactation care and believes that the bill fails to elevate IBCLCs above the other credentials which doesn't clear up the confusion in the field. She added that in most states where IBCLCs are licensed, Medicaid reimbursement remains a challenge and that the Department of Social Services (DSS) already testified in opposition to IBCLCs being able to accept Medicaid. The IBCLC believes that amending Medicaid policies to reimburse IBCLCs directly as already being done in Connecticut with doulas would be more effective.

Ms. Cuni believes that the bill fails to provide the following:

- Expand Medicaid coverage for lactation services.
- Increase the quality of lactation care available to Connecticut families.
- Protect the public from unskilled providers.
- Discourage new professionals from seeking IBCLC certification.
- Disproportionately affects IBCLCs in private practice increasing financial burdens on small business owners
- Finally, does not ensure increased reimbursement rates for IBCLCs making Medicaid participation financially unfeasible.

SciHonor Devotion, Founding Director, Earth's Natural Touch Birth Care:

Ms. Devotion would like to see the bill amended to include Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) for Medicaid reimbursement. She states that most Black and Brown doulas who provide lactation care are CLCs and not including CLCs would severely limit access to qualified lactation support for these families. She believes that this licensure should be optional like doula certification.

Ellie Mulpeter, Director, Academy of Lactation Policy, and Practice (ALPP):

Ms. Mulpeter stated that in Connecticut her organization had certified 468 CLCs compared to 266 IBCLCs as of February 16, 2024. She believes that the bill defines lactation consulting too broadly and it does not include the Certified Lactation Counselor's (CLC's) scope of practice which would restrict the ability of CLCs to practice. She would like the bill amended to include CLCs or to make certain that CLC's are still able to practice in Connecticut.

Julie Tower, IBCLC, Sweetly Nourish Lactation:

Ms. Tower mentioned the training disparity between IBCLCs and other lactation service providers. IBCLCs require extensive education and training to be titled IBCLC's. She believes that the bill creates additional barriers to care as IBCLCs already operate under the rules of the IBLCE and adding a state licensure requirement places unnecessary financial and administrative burdens on IBCLCs. She also pointed out that it could restrict IBCLC's ability to provide services such as telehealth across states lines. Mc. Tower believes that investing in IBCLC workforce development and educating families on lactation credentials so that they can make informed decisions would be better than licensure.

Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA):

CHA, while listed as opposed, states that they are generally supportive of the bill. CHA was included in stakeholder discussions last year and they noted that this year's bill has incorporated many recommendations that were the result of those discussions. CHA offered various language revisions to the bill. Including one that would allow accrediting bodies other than the IBCLE to support licensure and another revision which would allow other lactation professionals to still call themselves lactation consultants.

Michele Griswold, Assistant Professor, Southern Connecticut State University:

Ms. Griswold commented that IBCLCs in Connecticut are divided on this issue. Also, it should be noted that IBCLCs do not have an organization in Connecticut that represents their interests in this process.

Karen Peck, IBCLC, KIDSPACE:

Ms. Peck commented on the different education and training standards for IBCLCs and CLCs. She stated that the working group for this bill was not balanced or representative of IBCLCs in Connecticut as there were three IBCLCs on the working group and two were from out of state. She believes that this bill will be a gateway for CLCs to get licensed.

The following submitted similar testimony as expressed above in support of this bill:

- Nicky Prince
- Erinn Tanguay, IBCLC RLC
- Howard Cameron David
- Jennifer Tow, IBCLC

Reported by: Piotr Kolakowski

Date: 3/18/25