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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 7102 (as amended by House "A")\***

### ***AN ACT CONCERNING MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH CARE.***

#### **SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Office of Health Strategy (OHS) commissioner to develop a strategic plan to increase the number of birth centers and birthing hospitals in areas with high percentages of Medicaid recipients and limited access to these facilities. Under the bill, the OHS commissioner must report by January 1, 2027, to the Appropriations, Human Services, and Public Health committees on recommendations and estimated state appropriations needed to open more birth centers and birthing hospitals in underserved areas.

The bill also expands the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative's (CFI) objectives to include expanding fathers' roles in supporting maternal health. Under existing law, the Department of Social Services (DSS) must apply for any available federal and private health funds that promote CFI's objectives and award grants from these funds to entities that provide programs that promote various goals (e.g., responsible parenting and economic stability). The bill adds programs that support fathers' roles in supporting maternal health to the types of programs this funding may support.

\*House Amendment "A" (1) eliminates a requirement in the underlying bill that DSS increase Medicaid reimbursement for doulas as part of the department's bundled maternity payments and report on any increase and (2) extends the due date for OHS's report from December 1, 2025, to January 1, 2027.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ON BIRTH CENTERS AND HOSPITALS**

The bill requires OHS to develop a strategic plan to increase the

number of birth centers and birthing hospitals located in areas with a high percentage of Medicaid recipients and limited access to these facilities. A birth center is a freestanding facility licensed by the Department of Public Health (DPH) to provide perinatal, labor, delivery, and postpartum care during and immediately after delivery to people with low-risk pregnancies and healthy newborns, typically for less than 24 hours. (It does not include a hospital or facility attached to a hospital.) A birthing hospital is a health care facility that cares for patients during child delivery and postpartum patients and their newborns following birth.

The bill requires OHS to develop the strategic plan in consultation with the DSS and DPH commissioners and include the following:

1. barriers to opening birth centers and birthing hospitals,
2. incentives that the state may offer to facilitate opening these facilities, and
3. an evaluation of best practices nationwide to facilitate opening and sustaining these facilities.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea    17    Nay    5    (03/13/2025)