



PA 25-38—sHB 7102

Human Services Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH CARE

SUMMARY: This act 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 act, 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 facilitate the opening of more birth centers and birthing hospitals in underserved areas.

By law, the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative (CFI) council must actively participate in efforts to further CFI objectives. The act expands these efforts 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 with programs that promote various goals (e.g., responsible parenting and economic stability). The act adds programs that support expanding fathers' roles in supporting maternal health to the types of programs this funding may support.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025

STRATEGIC PLAN ON BIRTH CENTERS AND HOSPITALS

The act requires OHS to develop a strategic plan to increase the number of birth centers and birthing hospitals 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 (1) patients during child delivery and postpartum periods and (2) newborns following birth.

The act 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.