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Act No. 19 (S.18). An act relating to licensure of freestanding birth centers

Subjects: Health; health care facilities; birth centers; health insurance; Medicaid; certificate of need

This act establishes licensure requirements for freestanding birth centers, which are facilities that provide midwifery care, low-risk deliveries, and newborn care immediately after delivery, and that are not part of a hospital. The act directs the Department of Health to adopt rules for birth centers based on national birth center standards published by the American Association of Birth Centers that include requirements for operating a birth center, the scope of services that may be provided at a birth center, and requirements for written practice guidelines and policies that include procedures for transferring a patient to a hospital when necessary and for collaborating with other health care providers to deliver appropriate care to patients. The act exempts birth centers from certificate of need requirements and requires health insurance plans that cover maternity services to cover them when they are provided at a birth center. It also requires the Agency of Human Services to seek federal approval for Vermont Medicaid to cover prenatal, maternity, postpartum, and newborn services provided at a birth center.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on May 13, 2025