

Testimony S.18 – House Committee on Human Services – Pamela Cota, RN

April 2, 2025

The Division of Licensing and Protection's Survey and Certification Unit is the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) state survey agency for CMS certified facilities and providers, and also licenses state providers. We currently have 17 total nurse surveyors in the field who inspect 15 different provider types. Each provider type has a different set of regulations and their own survey process, so our staff are accustomed to surveying multiple different provider types.

We support Vermonters having a choice on where they give birth, and would be willing and able to conduct the survey work for the Department of Health in regards to Free Standing Birth Centers. Currently we conduct State hospital licensing work for the Department of Health via a memorandum of understanding (MOU), so the structure already exists for the addition of this work to that MOU.

In our work overseeing hospitals, we evaluate labor and delivery units for compliance with federal and state requirements, with 5 surveyors currently trained for that work. The frequency of routine re-licensing surveys for this provider type is not clear currently, and we can't predict the amount of complaint investigations that will be needed, so I can't speak to specific amounts of resources, but we are confident that we can support this work for 1-2 Birth Centers. In speaking with other states in our region, complaint volume for Free Standing Birth Centers is extremely low, so we don't anticipate a large volume of work associated with this provider type.

In conclusion, we support this bill and are confident we will be able to provide the resources to conduct surveys and investigations on behalf of the Department of Health at the interval decided by rulemaking.