**PALMETTO ASSOCIATION OF LICENSED MIDWIVES,** APRIL 23, 2019

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Community Birth supporters, including consumers and representatives from several South Carolina Community Midwife organizations, gathered today at the statehouse.

Jami Morris, President of the Palmetto Association of Licensed Midwives, read a letter to Governor McMaster urging his office to investigate options for adequate insurance and Medicaid reimbursement for Community Birth services, and that consumers of midwife services be given equal access to the SC sponsored Levels of Perinatal Care.

Consumers were encouraged to become more politically active by Representative Jonathan Hill. Consumers then introduced themselves to their Senators and Representatives.

Representative Robert Ridgeway, an obstetrician from Manning, introduced the group from the House floor.

Consumer Birth entails both Home and Birth Center deliveries under the supervision of a Licensed Midwife. There are currently 4 Licensed Birth Centers and 34 Licensed Midwives in South Carolina. They deliver approximately 1000 babies per year in South Carolina, but believe that many women who would prefer community care are being denied coverage for these services. Lauren Small, has had two home deliveries with a Licensed Midwife in Columbia, "My insurance company told me that my plan specifically stated that homebirths are not covered. This made it impossible to have my midwife covered even as an out of network provider."

The largest Licensed Birth Center in South Carolina, owned by Greenville Prisma Hospital, recently moved into the hospital setting citing low insurance reimbursement and as a major detriment to their ability to continue operations. Another major birth center chain, Baby & Co., has also announced a scheduled closing of all of their North Carolina Birth Centers because of financial unsustainability. Jami Morris, President of Palmetto Association of Licensed Midwives stated in regard to Medicaid reimbursement, "If any form of reimbursement is actually attained by midwife attended births, this reimbursement is at a rate so low that few, if any, midwives in SC are able to offer service to pregnant Medicaid enrollees."

PALM estimated that that the midwife model of prenatal care could lower birth and postpartum costs by over $2000 per Medicaid recipient alone, and also reduce rates of induction, C-section, NICU admission, and ER visits.

PHOTOS: group photo, Jami, Jonathan, consumer, House Balcony, a kid

Immediately put on PALM website and social media and share from there. Forward to:

PRESS WHO HAVE COVERED MIDWIVES/BIRTH CENTERS IN THE PAST:

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