

# Certified Nurse Midwives Act 50

**HB 1255, PN 2290**

**Sponsor: Rep. Waters**

**Date Enacted: July 20, 2007**

## **Summary:**

Act 50 provides nurse midwives with prescriptive authority allowing them to better manage obstetrical and gynecological care for their patients pursuant to a collaborative agreement with a physician.

## **Prior Law:**

The Medical Practice Act of December 20, 1985 (P.L. 457, No. 112) defined the practice of midwifery and provided for licensure. 49 Pa. Code, Chapter 18, Subchapter A defined midwifery practice, midwife protocol, and collaborative agreement, and specified scope of practice. Medical Board regulations prohibited nurse midwives from prescribing drugs and ordering medical devices or diagnostic tests. House Bill 1255 amends the Medical Practice Act to expand the scope of practice (as detailed above).

## **Analysis:**

Act 50 amends the Medical Practice Act to expand the scope of practice for licensed nurse midwives through collaborative agreements to prescribe, dispense, and order prescriptions for medical care. Under this legislation, nurse midwives are authorized to provide and manage primary health care of women during pregnancy, child birth and the postpartum period, provide care of the neonate and provide office gynecological care and family planning services. They are also given prescriptive authority on legend drugs and controlled substances in Schedules III and IV at a limit of 30 days before a referral is required and in Schedule II at a limit of 72 hours before a referral is required. This authority is dependent upon the CNM having: (1) completed 45 credit hours in advanced pharmacology beyond the level of a professional nursing program, (2) completed 16 hours of continuing education credits in advanced pharmacology approved by the State Board of Nursing biannually for the renewal of their license, and (3) acted in collaboration with a physician as set forth in a written agreement. Additionally, this bill allows nurse midwives to prescribe, dispense, order and administer medical devices, immunizing agents, laboratory tests, and therapeutic, diagnostic and preventative measures, in a manner consistent with their education and certification.

## **Impact:**

Until now, Pennsylvania was the only state that does not give nurse midwives prescriptive authority, causing unnecessary delays that affected patient care and safety. Nurse midwives deliver almost 10% of live births state-wide, and in some areas close to 50%. This allows nurse midwives to practice to the full extent of their education and training, and frees up physicians to focus on more complicated cases. As part of the package of scope of practice bills under Governor Rendell's Prescription for Pennsylvania, this will increase the overall efficiency of the healthcare system.

**Effective Date: 60 days from enactment**