

March 12, 2024

Honorable Susan R. Donovan  
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: H-7882- Relating to Health and Safety – Lactation Consultant Practice Act of 2014

Dear Chair Donovan and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

Please accept the Rhode Island Health Center Association's letter in support of House Bill 7882, which seeks to update the "Lactation Consultant Practice Act of 2014" to include recognition of the Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) and Advanced Lactation Counselor (ALC) certifications as professional lactation support roles eligible for licensure.

While many families express intentions to breastfeed, a significant number do not continue as long as they desire; discontinuation rates have been shown to be higher for non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic/Latino, and multiracial mothers, contributing to greater disparities.<sup>1</sup> Community Health Centers in Rhode Island provide medical, dental, and behavioral health care to over 200,000 racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse individuals. Ensuring equitable access to education and breastfeeding support is critical to improving breastfeeding continuation rates and promoting better maternal and infant health outcomes.

By formally recognizing CLC and ALC certifications, we have the opportunity to broaden and diversify the pool of available lactation support professionals in Rhode Island. This recognition will not only enhance access to quality lactation support for families but also help address breastfeeding disparities.

Sincerely,

*M. Campbell*

Melissa Campbell  
Policy Manager

Rhode Island Health Center Association members include:  
Blackstone Valley Community Health Care Inc. ~ Comprehensive Community Action Program ~  
East Bay Community Action Program~ Providence Community Health Centers ~  
Thundermist Health Center ~ Tri-County Community Action ~  
WellOne Primary Medical and Dental Care ~ Wood River Health

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<sup>1</sup> Quintero, S.M., Strassle, P.D., Londoño Tobón, A. et al. Race/ethnicity-specific associations between breastfeeding information source and breastfeeding rates among U.S. women. *BMC Public Health* 23, 520 (2023).  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15447-8>