

Department of Commerce, Community
and Economic Development

Division of Corporations, Business
and Professional Licensing

Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2024



Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

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This report is required under Alaska Statute 08.01.070(10).

**Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives
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Board Membership (as of the Date This Report was Approved)

Date of Final Board Approval: 6/5/2024

Bethel Belisle, Certified Direct-Entry Midwife, Chair

Rachel Pugh, Certified Direct-Entry Midwife

Darcy Lucey, Certified Nurse-Midwife

Hannah St. George, Public Member

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Accomplishments

The fiscal year (FY) is July 1st through June 30th; this report is for board business accomplished in FY 24, with proposed actions planned for FY 25. In FY 24, the board held 4 teleconferences in which Bethel Belisle, CDM presided as Chair. In these teleconferences, the board discussed and acted on apprenticeship and license applications, regulation projects, goals and objectives for the current and upcoming fiscal year, as well as sought input for various regulatory and licensing issues from the Department of Law and reviewed and voted on Consent Agreements in order to resolve ongoing investigations.

The board was named in an executive order, EO 130, that ordered the termination of the Board of Direct-Entry Midwives with the responsibilities of the board being transferred to the staff of the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. There was opposition to this EO from all board members present at meetings in January and February, and there was considerable public comment during the legislative hearings. The legislature voted to maintain the board and EO 130 was overturned.

The Board has no open investigations as of the time of this report. They have all been resolved/concluded.

The board's sunset was extended until June 30, 2025, although the recommendation by the auditor had been for June 30, 2027. There is a current audit being conducted at the end of FY24.

For FY 23, total revenue was \$11,475 and expenses were \$27,546, leaving an annual surplus of \$75,851.

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Activities

The Board held 4 meeting by teleconference during FY24. They maintained a quorum for all of these meetings.

The Board advocated for the continuation of the Board in response to EO130. One board member went to Juneau in February to speak with legislators about this issue in person.

The Board reviewed and approved several Midwife-Apprentice applications and Direct-Entry Midwife applications.

Board members spoke via phone during hearings regarding EO130 and the Board Sunset Bill.

Several investigations were concluded and consent agreements were approved.

The Board was in communication with the legislative sponsor for HB 175 and was active in trying to recruit support for this bill, although it did not move through the legislative process.

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Needs

HB 175 did not receive action this session, and so will not renew. The board will need to offer any revisions to the prior recommendations for statutory changes and prepare an updated document to present to a legislator for the fall 2024 legislative session. The board will need to either confirm Representative Allard as our sponsor, or seek a new sponsor to carry this bill in the fall. The board will need to seek public support for the new bill in the fall, once we have a bill number. The Board may need to travel to Juneau during the Fall legislative session to seek support for these statutory changes.

The board is actively reviewing regulations regarding peer review and client death report processes, continuing education requirements, clarification of terms and elimination of dissonant regulations, clarification of preceptor requirements, and clarifying practices that require a midwifery license. They will need staff and possibly legal assistance/support as they work through these changes.

The board is tasked with the protection of public safety. As such, the board will continue to monitor investigations and disciplinary actions and advocate for expeditious processing and completion of these cases. They will rely on adequate staffing and support of the investigative staff to facilitate this task.

The Board currently has two open seats. The Board relies on the Governor's office to fill the two open seats on the board to facilitate ease of obtaining a quorum in order to conduct business efficiently. The Board will continue to seek applicants to submit applications for these positions.

The Board will continue to make regulatory adjustments in order to bring statutes and regulations in line with each other, eliminate dissonance, and ensure public safety. We may need expert testimony and/or community support to ensure these regulations are in line with community/national standards of care.

The Board will need to pursue another Sunset bill once the current audit is completed. The Board's current sunset date is 6/30/2025. The Board will review the recommendations of the audit that is currently being done, once these are available.