



Board of Directors

Founding Chairman

Quentin D. Young, MD

President

Steven K. Rothschild, MD*

Immediate President

Claudia Fegan, MD*

Vice President

Suzanne Carlberg-Racich,
PhD, MSPH*

Treasurer

Lon Berkeley*

Secretary

Jennifer McGowan-Tomke,
MPH*

Board of Directors

Karen Aguirre, MPH*

Misty Drake, MA

Joe Feinglass, PhD

Michael Gelder†

Robyn L. Golden, MA, LCSW

Amy C. Lulich, MHA

Rene David Luna, MA

Ray Mendez, MD, MA

Yadira Montoya, MSPH

Linda Rae Murray, MD, MPH

Olyvia Phillips, MPH, MBA

Elena Quintana, PhD

Rachel Reichlin, MPH, MSN,
CTN-B

Gayle Riedmann, CNM

Melissa Simon, MD, MPH

Kai Tao, ND, MPH, CNM

Mildred Williamson, PhD, MSW*

Tom Wilson*

Joseph Zandoni, PhD, MILR

Executive Director

Margie Schaps, MPH

*Executive Committee Member

†Past President

April 11, 2024

RE: Chicago South Side Birth Center

April Simmons, Legal Counsel

Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board 525 W. Jefferson, 2nd floor
Springfield, IL 62761

Dear Ms. Simmons,

On behalf of the Health & Medicine Policy Research Group's Birth Center Task Force, we are writing in strong support of the Chicago South Side Birth Center application for Certificate of Need.

The number of OB units is limited on Chicago's south side, and birth outcomes for Black women are unacceptably high. We believe the Chicago South Side Birth Center is a viable and emergent solution for women, birthing people, and children on the South Side. The development of a birth center addresses the lack of care options on the Southside, as well as a solution to the disparate maternal and child health rates among Black birthing people and children on the South Side.

We have been advocating for the establishment of additional birth centers in Illinois for over 30 years, including advocating for new birth center licensing legislation, establishment of reasonable safety-based administrative rules, and the expansion of providers throughout the state.

With the well-studied and established benefits of birth centers (positive health outcomes, lower overall costs, high patient satisfaction) for pregnant patients, their families, and the state, the opening of a birth center on the south side of Chicago would certainly address a need that exists.

While the opportunity to establish birth centers in Illinois has existed for over 15 years, it has only been recently that providers, purchasers, and payers have recognized the significant value that it adds to the continuum of maternity care options available.

Please consider the Chicago South Side Birth Center application, because this would not only enable patients in the Chicago South Side service area to have access to this safe, cost-effective option, but it would reduce overall Medicaid and insurance costs, as well as address disparities in health and birth outcomes for Black women.

We'd be happy to provide further background research and information about any of the above if needed.

Sincerely,

Gayle Riedmann, CNM, MS, FACNM & Lon Berkeley, MS
(Co-chairs, Birth Center Task Force)