

# Midwifery: Administration of Medication

*SB 1275 Patron: Senator Dunnavant*

*HB 1511 Patrons: Delegates Adams, D.M., Kory, Clark, Gooditis, and Maldonado*

*Licensed Midwives are currently prohibited from obtaining, possessing, and administering medications within their scope of practice, intended to improve the health and safety of mothers and babies.*

## Why this Matters in Virginia

### Safety

Maternal mortality in the United States is higher than all other highly industrialized countries. More than 700 people die each year in the United States from childbirth-related causes, and it is estimated that approximately 60% of those deaths are preventable (Maternal Mortality Review Information Application (MMRIA), 2018). Hemorrhage is the leading cause of maternal death worldwide (James, 2022), and there are basic medications Licensed Midwives can administer to prevent or treat postpartum hemorrhage. Access to life-saving medications is essential to safe practice in all birth settings.

### Scope of Practice

Licensed Midwives in Virginia are restricted from administering medications that are within their scope of practice. Virginia is one of only two states that license midwives, yet restrict them from accessing these medications. Providers should be able to work within their full scope of practice.

### Workarounds

Families must jump through numerous hoops to access the medications that make their birth safer. Some have to drive over two hours to see a physician who would be willing to prescribe medications. Some have to go to the hospital within 2 hours of their baby's birth so that their baby can receive a potentially life-saving vitamin K injection or erythromycin eye ointment that can prevent permanent blindness due. Some people must choose between having to endure the pain of being sutured without the use of local anesthetic or risking permanent damage to their bodies by not having those lacerations repaired properly. Some must self-administer prescribed medications, while their Licensed Midwife stands by, unable to assist them due to an outdated law.