



Physicians Caring for Texans

House Committee on Public Health
Written Testimony Supporting House Bill 37
Texas Medical Association
March 24, 2025

Chair VanDeaver and members of the House Committee on Public Health:

The Texas Medical Association, representing more than 59,000 physician and medical student members across the state, appreciates the opportunity to submit comments *in support* of House Bill 37. We support the committee's efforts to provide perinatal palliative care services to families grieving the tragic loss of their newborn.

In 2022 (most recent year of data available), over 1,900 Texas babies died between 28 weeks of gestation and the first 7 days of life.¹ The loss of a baby, whether during pregnancy or shortly after birth, is one of the most painful experiences a family could endure. Perinatal palliative care services provide compassionate support to families of stillborn babies and those with babies born with life-limiting conditions during an incredibly difficult time. This multidisciplinary approach to care can help reduce the suffering of families facing the loss of a newborn by allowing them to spend more time with their baby. Medical technology – such as cooling care devices – can delay natural processes that occur in the body after death, allowing precious moments for family bonding and memory-making opportunities during the limited time they have with their baby.² Perinatal palliative care also focuses on pain management and maximizing quality of life for babies born with life-limiting conditions.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, perinatal palliative care is a coordinated care strategy with multiple components.³ Though perinatal palliative care does vary by institution, it often begins in pregnancy when expecting parents first learn about their baby's diagnosis. After diagnosis, care components often include development of a birth plan; access to neonatal and pediatric specialties; and emotional support during the prenatal, birth, and postnatal periods, including bereavement counseling.³ HB 37 would expand access to perinatal palliative care throughout Texas and allow grieving families to experience these compassionate support services from pregnancy through the days following the birth of their child.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We appreciate this committee's efforts to provide supportive perinatal palliative care services to families grieving the tragic loss of a newborn. For answers to further questions, please contact Matt Dowling, TMA director of Public Affairs, at matt.dowling@texmed.org.

¹ <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/data?top=6&lev=1&stop=371®=99&sreg=48&obj=8&slev=4>

² [https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175\(17\)30047-3/fulltext](https://www.jognn.org/article/S0884-2175(17)30047-3/fulltext)

³ <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2019/09/perinatal-palliative-care>