

MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE REPORT ISSUED: October 24, 2023
ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California
SUBJECT: Midwifery Advisory Council Member Appointment
STAFF CONTACT: Katherine Agbayani, Licensing Program Manager

ACTION REQUESTED:

After review and discussion, determine if the Board should appoint Faith Freeman to the vacant licensed midwife position and appoint Tamara Robertson to the vacant public member position on the Midwifery Advisory Council (MAC) effective January 1, 2024, for a three-year term that will expire on June 30, 2027. The MAC currently has three of six positions filled, which is not enough members to satisfy the quorum requirement; therefore, the Board must decide on the appointment of at least one of the vacant positions.

BACKGROUND:

Business and Professions Code section 2509 authorized the Board to create a MAC and appoint members. The MAC consists of three licensed midwives and three members of the public (one of which is a physician). The MAC is an advisory council that represents the midwifery community and the organizations/associations that represent licensed midwives. The MAC meetings are held in public to discuss topics of importance related to the practice of midwifery to make recommendations and provide advice to the Board.

The Board received one application for the vacant licensed midwife position on the MAC from Faith Freeman.

The Board received one application for the vacant public member position on the MAC from Tamara Robertson.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Board approve and appoint Faith Freeman and Tamara Robertson to serve on the MAC effective January 1, 2024.

MIND BODY BIRTH

WELLNESS AND BIRTHING CENTER

Faith Freeman CPM LM



9/21/23

Dear CA Medical Board, and Members of the Midwifery Advisory Council,

Please forgive my late application. I was unaware that there was a need for another midwife member of the Midwife Advisory Council until this week when I happened to see it posted online to the state website.

I am a Licensed Midwife currently practicing in Los Angeles, California. I own a birth and wellness center, Mind Body Birth, located in DTLA.

I offer birth center birth, home birth, collaborative care for clients planning a hospital birth, prenatal preparation sessions, well person care, childbirth classes, fertility preparation and support, and IUI (Intra-Uterine Insemination). The birth center also hosts classes for breastfeeding, newborn care, as well as an in-house chiropractor. We also host regular events providing free care clinics and open houses for the community. My staff includes an office manager, as well as five apprentices. I typically deliver 3-6 babies each month.

I have been a practicing midwife since 2007, and have practiced in California since 2018. Prior to living and practicing here in CA, I practiced for many years in Oklahoma, where I am originally from, and my radius at times also included Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, and Kansas. I have also spent time internationally, working as a midwife in Israel as well.

I love being a midwife, and feel so fortunate that I have been able to do something I love for so long.

I am passionate about training other midwives, and I have always included precepting students as part of my practice. Over the years I have trained and graduated over 15 midwives.

I also feel it is extremely important that midwifery care is accessible to all clients and families. and in order to help promote accessibility, I offer sliding scale, scholarships, insurance reimbursement options, financing, and payment plans for clients.

In 2013 while still practicing in Oklahoma, I was instrumental in forming a coalition of the midwives across the state between the different midwifery associations present in the Oklahoma at that time. I was also the Educational Director for the Midwives Society of Oklahoma for over 4 years. This position included hosting virtual and in-person support and training sessions for the various apprentices throughout the state, as well as scheduling, organizing, and hosting state-wide midwives continuing education conferences and seminars each year.

I was also one of the leaders heading up grassroots efforts in Oklahoma protesting against and raising awareness of negative legislation that arose, attempting to illegalize midwives in Oklahoma, as well as being part of the Legal Advisory Counsel in Oklahoma, as we worked towards licensure in the state at that time.

The midwifery community as a whole is extremely important to me – including building good relationships between all midwives, as well as continuing to build more ideal collaborative care with the medical community to provide better options and continuity of care for clients.

I feel it is so vitally important to always pursue improving on, and providing healthy, supportive, and sustainable work environments for all midwives, along with promoting improved diversity, inclusion, and amplification of the voices and presence of midwives from marginalized communities. Dismantling bias and privilege in the midwifery and birthing community through trainings, conversations, scholarships, and funding for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ midwives is something I feel passionate about.

For clients, I feel it is extremely important that midwifery care is supported and funded by the state and local community as much as possible to also aid accessibility and inclusion, and that midwives are one of the most crucial pillars for making a positive change in the broader maternal health crises existing in our world, Nation, and State.

I have recently started a non-profit, with the goal of applying for State and National grant funding, as well as through donations and fund-raising, to help cover and fund midwifery care for clients. I am excited to bring this dream and goal into full fruition.

I am a single parent to my _____ who was born at home, supported by my wonderful midwives. She and I live in _____

I moved to California in 2018, when _____ was a baby. As much as I loved my practice and clientele in Oklahoma, I was ready for a change of scenery and had always dreamed of living close to the beach. It is also extremely important to me to raise my _____ in a much more diverse and inclusive population than was present in Oklahoma.

I would love the opportunity to be a part of the Midwifery Advisory Council and would feel honored to be considered.

Thank you.

Faith Freeman CPM LM

Certified Professional Midwife

CA Licensed Midwife #549

NPI#: 1750634812

**MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Midwifery Program**

Agenda Item 15

Midwifery Advisory Council Member Application

The Midwifery Advisory Council (MAC) is an advisory council responsible for making recommendations on matters presented by the California Medical Board (Board) members, Board staff, or designees. The MAC represents the midwifery community and licensed midwives in the State of California. The MAC is comprised of three licensed midwives, one physician and surgeon, and two public members. Public member representatives have an interest in midwifery, but are not licensed midwives. The MAC members volunteer to serve and attend all MAC meetings for up to a three-year term. This application form has been developed to review volunteers interested in serving on the MAC. To be considered for appointment, please mail, email, or fax your MAC Member Application form no later than [REDACTED] to:

Medical Board of California
2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 1200
Sacramento, CA 95815
Attention: Midwifery Program
FAX: (916) 263-8936
tonya.morairty@mbc.ca.gov

Name:	Last <u>FREEMAN</u>	First <u>FAITH</u>	Middle Initial <u>E</u>	Suffix						
Address:	[REDACTED]									
Phone:	[REDACTED]	Home # <u>n/a</u>	Work# [REDACTED]	Fax# [REDACTED]						
Email:	[REDACTED]									
Are you a California Licensed Midwife?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		License Number: LM # <u>#549</u>							
Are you a California Licensed Physician?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		License Number: _____							
	If yes, are you currently practicing as an obstetrician/gynecologist? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO									
Are you, or have you ever been, a board member of a midwifery or physician related entity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO If yes, please list the name of the board(s): <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Name</td> <td>Dates of Membership</td> </tr> <tr> <td><u>Midwives Society of Oklahoma</u></td> <td><u>2014-2018</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name</td> <td>Dates of Membership</td> </tr> </table>				Name	Dates of Membership	<u>Midwives Society of Oklahoma</u>	<u>2014-2018</u>	Name	Dates of Membership
Name	Dates of Membership									
<u>Midwives Society of Oklahoma</u>	<u>2014-2018</u>									
Name	Dates of Membership									
Organization/Association: <i>(If volunteering as a non-licensure "public member" please insert the word "SELF - PUBLIC Interest")</i>										
Position within the Organization/Association: <i>(Board member, executive, or member)</i>	<u>Educational Director</u>									
Do you know anyone who might oppose your appointment to the MAC Advisory Council?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO									
Is there anything in your background, if made known to the general public through service on the Advisory Council, would cause embarrassment to you and/or the Board?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO									
Have you ever been formally disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics or unprofessional conduct by an organization?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO									

**MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Midwifery Program**

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Please attach your resume or curriculum vitae.

Please attach a letter outlining your qualifications and interest in midwifery and home birth, including prior involvement with midwifery-related organizations.

Please attach three letters of recommendation from licensed midwives or clients in your area.
(If applying for midwife position at least 2 of the letters must be from practicing midwives in your area)


(Signature)

9/21/23
(Date)

DISCLOSURE: Providing this information is strictly voluntary. The personal information requested on this form is being collected for consideration of appointment as a member of the MAC. This information will be reviewed by Board staff and members of the Board and/or MAC. This form will be retained in the files of the Licensing Program. This form and attachments must be submitted by [REDACTED] to be considered.



Qualifications ~

- Direct Entry Midwife: 2007-2009
- Certified Professional Midwife: since 2009
- Licensed Midwife in Texas: from 2013-2019 (did not renew; TX Licensing unneeded at this time)
- Licensed Midwife in California: since 2018
- Active NARM Midwife Training Preceptor: since 2010
- Midwives Society of Oklahoma Board Educational Director: from 2014-2018
- Midwifery Legal Advisory Counsel; Oklahoma: 2017
- Office Management and Administration
- Consistent 5-Star Ratings on both Google and Yelp
- Homebirth and Birth Center Experience
- Hospital Birth Experience
- International Birth Experience
- Homebirth Parent

Work Experience ~

- **2022 – Present** Mind Body Birth Wellness and Birthing Center
Birth Center + Homebirth Practice; Los Angeles (DTLA) California
Owner; Midwife; Preceptor
Deliver 40-60 babies per year
- **2019 – 2022** Born To Be Loved Birth: CA
Private Homebirth Practice; Los Angeles, California
Owner; Midwife; Preceptor
Deliver 40-60 babies per year
- **2018 – 2020** GraceFull Birthing
Birth Center + Homebirth Practice; Los Angeles (Silverlake) California
Senior Staff Midwife; Office Manager; Preceptor
Delivered 3-8 babies per month, both at home or at the birth center
- **2010 – 2018** Born To Be Loved Birth: OK
Private Homebirth Practice; Tulsa, Oklahoma
Owner; Midwife; Preceptor
Delivered 40-80 babies per year
- **2009, 2014** Overseas Volunteer Experience
Co-Midwife: Ilana Shemesh CNM; Homebirth Practice
Labor & Delivery Assistant: Becor Holim; Jerusalem Hospital
Newborn Nursery Assistant: Shaare Tsedik; Jerusalem Hospital
- **2011 – 2012** Community Midwifery Services
Birth Center; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Staff Midwife
Delivered up to 5 babies per month at home and at the birth center, in addition to personal clients in my private practice
- **2010 – Present** **NARM Preceptor**
Training 1-3 resident midwives at all times

Midwifery Education ~

- **2004 – 2007** **Midwifery Academic Education:** Association of Texas Midwives Midwifery Training Program
- **2005 – 2006** **Midwifery Clinical Apprenticeship:** Family Birth Services Birth Center; Grand Prairie, Texas
- **2007** **Midwifery Clinical Apprenticeship:** Homebirth Practice; Springdale, Arkansas
- **2008** **Midwifery Clinical Apprenticeship:** Casa De Nacimiento Birth Center; El Paso, Texas



09/22/2023

Dear CA Medical Board,

As a Prenatal, Postpartum, and Pediatric Chiropractor in Los Angeles, I have had the pleasure of working with Faith Freeman in both a professional and personal capacity. Faith is the most capable, and dedicated midwife I have ever worked with. In fact, she birthed my very own daughter, and my experience with her was invaluable. From the knowledge she shares with clients, to the immense work she does within the birthing community, I am proud to recommend her for the Midwifery Advisory Council.

Outside of experience as a head midwife within a Center structure, Faith does home births, consistently networks and works with midwives, and birth workers within the hospital setting. All of the above lends to her being extremely well rounded not only as a practitioner but a preceptor as well.

Faith's patients and students greatly benefit from her vast knowledge, and love her for it.

It is my firm belief that the Midwifery Advisory Council will gain a strong asset in bringing aboard Mrs. Freeman. She will bring on close to 2 decades of experience, leadership, dedication in principle, and community outreach.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Dirks, DC



Family Chiropractor
Independent Practitioner
Berlin Wellness Group

Jessica Diggs



September 25th, 2023

Medical Board of California
2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 1200
Sacramento, CA 95815
Attention: Midwifery Advisory Council

Dear Medical Board of California:

It is with ease that I write this character reference on behalf of the midwife Faith Freeman. I have known Faith for 5 years. Her character preceded her well before I had the pleasure of meeting her. Our colleague spoke highly of her experience as a midwife and advocate in Oklahoma. Professionally, Faith served as my clinical preceptor at a local birth center for 6 months. We have since become neighbors and dear friends. During this time, I have had the privilege of witnessing her consistent display of integrity, consideration for her patients, and competence as a skilled provider.

Faith is a diligent care provider, a doting mother, and a thought leader amongst her peers. The running theme in how she shows up personally or professionally is her forethought and consideration for intersection of healthcare and individualized practices. She embodies the "midwifery model of care" in everything she approaches. She has gift of seeing the bigger picture of safety and thus uses it to guide patients prenatally to help prevent complications. Whether it is explaining the evolving ACOG guidelines or acknowledging the complexity of reproductive health, Faith demonstrates the character of a responsible and cautious midwife.

Her deep convictions to safety and continuing education are respectable and makes recommending her for the Midwifery Advisory Council in the state of California an easy task. Midwives of CA deserve a council member as considerate and experienced as Faith Freeman.

Please reach out if you have any questions.


Jessica Diggs, LM 525



September 26th, 2023

Dear Program Director,

It is my pleasure to write in support of the application of Mrs. Faith Freeman for your Midwifery Advisory Council. As is evident from her CV, Mrs. Freeman has excelled throughout her career with hundreds upon hundreds of successful births. Her clinical, interpersonal, leadership and management abilities demonstrate the qualities necessary for your Council. In being a longtime part of the birthing community, I have witnessed Mrs. Freeman in both an inpatient/outpatient, and hospital settings. Mrs. Freeman is a warm, engaging individual who teaches and leads by example, is inclusive, and is constantly looking for new ways to engage with and learn from varied communities.

In conclusion, I am happy to give Mrs. Freeman my highest recommendation for your Advisory Council. In my experience, there is no one more dedicated and deserving.

If you have any additional questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Beth Cannon, LM, CPM
Birthing Rhythm Founder

Tamara Robertson

Tonya Morairty

Associate Governmental Program Analyst

Midwifery Advisory Council

2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 1200

Sacramento, CA 95815

Dear Members of the Midwifery Advisory Council,

I am writing to express my strong interest in becoming a member of the Midwifery Advisory Council. My passion for reproductive justice, combined with my experience as a Community Doula, Healer, Spiritualist, and a US Navy Veteran, has provided me with a unique perspective and skill set that I believe would be a valuable addition to your council.

As a Community Doula, I have had the privilege of supporting numerous individuals and families during the transformative journey of childbirth. I have witnessed the power of informed, compassionate, and culturally sensitive care during the childbirth process. This experience has fueled my commitment to advocating for comprehensive midwifery services that promote the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of expectant parents.

My background as a Healer and Spiritualist has allowed me to approach childbirth from a holistic and culturally competent perspective. I believe in the importance of acknowledging and honoring the spiritual and cultural aspects of childbirth, and I am dedicated to promoting inclusivity and diversity in midwifery care.

Additionally, my service as a US Navy Veteran has instilled in me a deep sense of discipline, leadership, and dedication to a mission. I am adept at working collaboratively in a team and am committed to serving my community and country in any capacity I can.

I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the Midwifery Advisory Council's mission of enhancing midwifery practices, advocating for reproductive justice, and supporting expectant parents. I am confident that my diverse background and dedication to these principles align well with the council's objectives.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to further discuss how I can contribute to the important work of the Midwifery Advisory Council.

Sincerely,

Tamara Robertson

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tonya.morairty@mbc.ca.gov

Name:	<div> <div>Last</div> <div>First</div> <div>Middle Initial</div> <div>Suffix</div> </div> <div>ROBERTSON, TAMARA</div>			
Address:	<div> <div>Street</div> <div>City</div> <div>State</div> <div>Zip Code</div> </div> <div>[REDACTED]</div>			
Phone:	<div>Cell#</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div>	<div>Home #</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div>	<div>Work#</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div>	<div>Fax#</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div>
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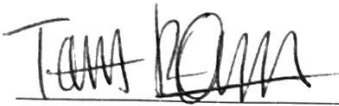
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(Signature)

230CT23

(Date)

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MIND BODY BIRTH

WELLNESS AND BIRTHING CENTER

Faith Freeman CPM LM



10/23/23

Dear CA Midwifery Advisory Council,

I am happy to write on behalf of my dear friend and colleague, Tamara Robertson.

I had the privilege to meet Tam at a birth over three years ago when she was the doula for one of my clients. Since that time, I've been able to get to know her both professionally and personally. We've worked together as a doula and midwife team with many more clients, as well as becoming close friends.

Tam is a very giving and loving person to everyone she meets. She truly cares about people and spends much of her time listening, caring for, and finding even more ways to help her community. Tam loves the birthing community deeply and is extremely passionate about options for safe and competent care being available for her clients. She is very involved in both local and national birth and maternal health organizations to help improve the outcomes for all birthing people, and especially for Black birthing people and Black maternal health outcomes, as she knows and has experienced first-hand the lack of awareness, unsafe care, and deep biases that pervade both the medical and midwifery communities in their approach to Black maternal health.

Tam treats all of her clients as family – spending time in their homes, getting to know them and their partner and family well, supporting her clients tirelessly through their birth, and following up postpartum with several sessions in their home educating them with breastfeeding, cooking delicious and nutritious meals, as well as supporting and helping them navigate emotional and physical recovery. Tam also stays in contact with her clients for several months and even years after, giving long term support and friendship throughout their parenthood journeys.

Tam also owns and runs a beautiful shop in Long Beach, Divine and Twined, where she sells herbs, candles, incense and many other products that support emotional, mental and physical health and spirituality. Tam uses her store and classroom/event space to host a wide variety of community events, doula trainings, postpartum support meetings, and more.

Tam is well-known throughout Los Angeles as one of the best doulas and birth advocates. She has also started a non-profit, For Mamas By Mamas, with the goal of bringing funding for doula and midwifery care to her community, and improving Black maternal health outcomes throughout Southern California and beyond.

The CA Medical Board and Midwifery Advisory Council would be more than fortunate to have her as a member. Tam puts her whole heart into everything she does – and her heart is 100% for the California midwifery and birthing community.

Thank you for the opportunity to write this letter.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Faith Freeman CPM LM".

Faith Freeman CPM LM

Certified Professional Midwife

CA Licensed Midwife #549

NPI#: 1750634812

FROM THE DESK OF

Torin Ashtun Thomas

October 26, 2023

Dear CA Midwifery Advisory Council,

I am grateful to share my experience with my doula, Tamara Robertson.

Tamara was a crucial part of my birth team. Her gentle nature and plethora of knowledge gave me peace during labor and confidence in postpartum. Thanks to her immense support, I was able to have a home birth for my first baby which labored for only four hours.

I met Tam at her store front 'Divine and Twined' on the Eastside of Long Beach. We had an uplifting conversation about the importance of bringing resources into our community. This is when she shared her doula services. Once I found out I was pregnant a few months later, I immediately knew who to call. Tamara's insight on the holistic birthing community assisted me in quickly finding a midwife who I trusted. Throughout my prenatal care, Mrs. Robertson supported me by creating a safe space for me to rest, brought me meals, shared endless birthing advice and connected me with all the resources I would need during prenatal, birth and postpartum. During this time she made sure I was properly nourished, emotionally stable and prepared for the magic of giving birth for the first time. I had many fears in my second trimester which I constantly talked through with Tamara. Her wise words about the strength of a woman's body gave me much needed encouragement when I went into labor at 37 weeks.

My cervix dilated quickly by the time I realized I was in labor. As my husband communicated the contractions to Tam, I remembered the breathing techniques I practiced with her just the day before. I was able to bring myself to a space of complete surrender and peace by getting out of my head and "resting in my power", as Tam worded it. By the time Tamara and the midwife rushed through my bedroom door, I was fully dilated. Mrs. Robertson immediately began rubbing pressure points on my feet and back that relieved my pain. She encouraged me to send my energy down to my womb and be intentional when pushing my son out. 30 minutes later, my baby boy was born. Tamara's nurturing ways did not stop once my labor was over. She continues to check in with me a few times a week til this day. Tamara is a treasure to me and the birthing community of California.

Best,

Torin Ashtun Thomas

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to wholeheartedly recommend Tamara Robertson as a remarkable doula who has provided invaluable support throughout my pregnancy and continues to be an unwavering source of guidance and encouragement as I navigate the journey of motherhood.

I first connected with Tam during my pregnancy, and from the moment we met, I felt an immediate sense of comfort and trust in her abilities. Throughout my pregnancy, her support was instrumental. She provided emotional, physical, and informational support that greatly eased my anxieties and concerns. Her compassionate and nurturing approach empowered me to have a positive birth experience.

Beyond my pregnancy, Tam has continued to be a pillar of support as I embrace the challenges and joys of motherhood. Her guidance, insight, and genuine care have been invaluable as I navigate the early stages of parenthood. She has been an incredible resource, helping me build my confidence as a mother and offering practical advice that has made a world of difference.

In conclusion, I cannot emphasize enough how fortunate I have been to have Tam by my side during this transformative period of my life. Her dedication, expertise, and unwavering support have made an immeasurable difference in my pregnancy journey and early motherhood experience. I wholeheartedly recommend Tam to any expectant mother or new parent seeking a skilled and compassionate doula.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like further information or have any questions. I am more than happy to provide additional insights into my experience with her.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashlie Wellington'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. Below the signature, the name 'Ashlie Wellington' is printed in a black, sans-serif font.

Ashlie Wellington

October 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My mama, Dr. Maya Angelou, and Tamara Robertson; that is on my list of top 3 phenomenal women.

I met Tamara in 2021, when she blessed Long Beach, and all of California, with one of the only Black women-owned Botanicas on the West Coast, Divine and Twined.

The moment I walked into Divine & Twined, Tamara's spirit lit a spark in me. That spark motivated me to grow spiritually, emotionally, and within a year physically, when I was blessed with the conception of my son.

Once pregnant, I asked Tamara to be my doula. With joy, honor, and great responsibility she accepted this position and immediately gave me direction and a helping hand to take the next steps in my motherhood journey.

My mama, Tamara Robertson, and The Holy Spirit; that is whom I can attest held my hand, my heart, and got me through the deep gloom and fear that surrounded me during pregnancy.

Tamara rubbed my feet, prayed over my belly, and loved me deeply during my long 42-week pregnancy.

Once it was time to birth, Tamara held me up and held it down to ensure I had the best possible birthing experience, which can be dark and scary as a single Black woman birthing in Watts, California.

Once my son was Earthside, she didn't stop there. Bouquet of flowers, warm, nourishing meals, and a whole lot of mama guidance was given to me by my divine doula, Tamara.

I am incredibly grateful and astonished by the strength, wisdom, and Godliness that Tamara Robertson embodies.

I am positive that the skills, ambition, and deep passion for healthy pregnancies and birthing experiences will benefit your organization and midwifery school.

Sincerely,

Malinda Lewis