CMOCC California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative

# Partnering with Doulas to Improve Perinatal Outcomes and Promote Birth Equity

Facilitator: Holly Smith, MPH, CNM, FACNM Panelists: Ann Fulcher, CLE, CD Michelle Sanders, CD, CLEC



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# **Inclusive Language Notice**

Currently recognized identifiers such as "birthing people," "mother," "maternal," "they," "them," "she," "her." and "pregnancy-capable person" are used in reference to a person who is pregnant or has given birth.

We recognize not all people who become pregnant and give birth identify as mothers or women and will use the above-recognized terms interchangeably to represent all those present in this space receiving care for pregnancy services. All persons are equally deserving of respectful patient-centered care that helps them attain their full potential and live authentic, healthy lives. The healthcare team should respect individual patient preferences regarding gendered language throughout the course of their care.

The term "**family**" is used to refer to any persons the pregnant or postpartum patient designates as such (alternatives: partners, husbands, wives, support persons, loved ones).

The term "clinician" is used to denote nursing and medical staff, whereas the term "provider" refers to a clinician with diagnosing and prescribing authority.

# CMQCC

#### Today's Facilitator and Panelists



Holly Smith, CNM, MPH, FACNM Project Lead, CMQCC Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth



Michelle Sanders, CD, CLEC Founder/Executive Director, Beauty for Ashes Maternal Wellness Inc.



Ann Fulcher CLE, CD Manager, Volunteer Doula Program UC San Diego Health

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# Objectives

- Understand the role of doulas in improving perinatal outcomes
- Demonstrate the concept of "doula as advocate" and why this role is critical in reducing racism-based disparities
- Understand the different types of doula programs that exist (e.g., volunteer hospital programs and community doula collectives)
- Summarize strategies for partnering with doulas to improve outcomes

#### This is Webinar #4 in a Five-Part Series



Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans Aquality Improvement Toolkit

1. The Next Step in California's Quality Improvement Journey: Integrating midwives, doulas, & communitybased birth care (Nov 30, 2022)

2. Harnessing the Power of Team-Based Care to Improve Maternity Outcomes (Feb 3, 2023)

3. Tackling the Midwife Question: What is midwifery integration and why is it important for moms and birthing people in California? (May 9, 2023)

4. Partnering with Doulas (Aug 30, 2023)

5. Community Birth: Improving transfer of care (Oct 25, 2023)

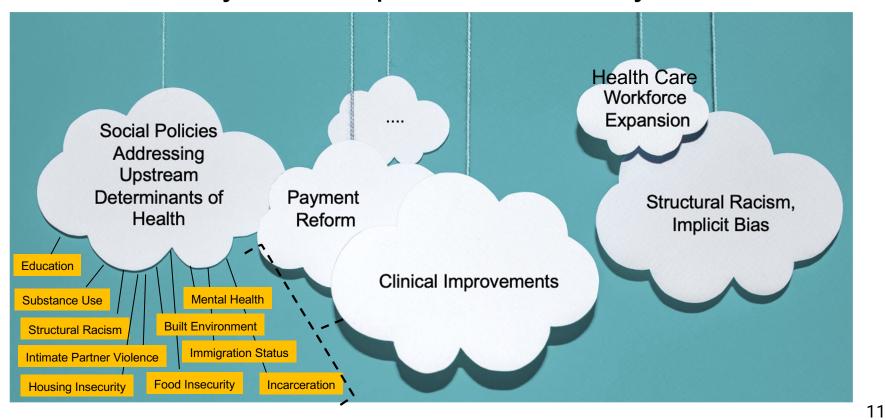


Recordings at https://www.cmqcc.org/resources-tool-kits/webinars

## The Elephant in the Zoom



#### Maternity Care Improvement Ecosystem



#### CMOCC

#### Partnering with Doulas (and midwives, and community birth...) to Improve Outcomes

**Patient-Centered Care:** *"Providing care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions."* – Institute of Medicine | Institute for Health Care Improvement

There is no singular intervention that is a silver bullet – time to use all the tools!

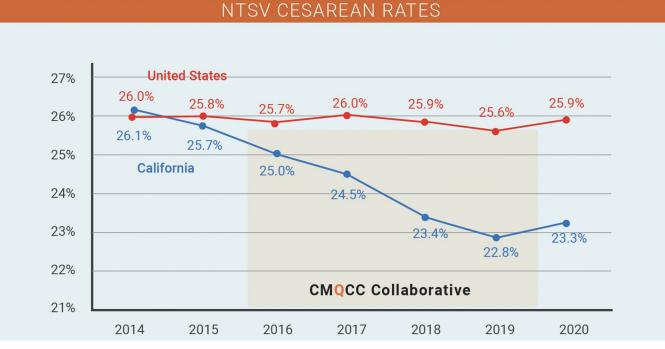
Doulas are critical patient advocates and connectors to services, just as much as they are there for labor support

Community birth is safe (home and birth center birth) when:

- trained, skilled providers (not just CNMs!)
- ongoing risk assessment;
- when medical consultation and higher levels of care are easily accessible

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#### Landscape of Cesarean Birth in California (compared to United States, pre- and post-collaborative)



Source of US Data: National Vital Statistics System – Natality (NVSS-N), CDC/NCHS Source of CA Data: CMQCC Maternal Data Center based on linked patient discharge and birth certificate data

Image source: CMQCC Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans

#### Most Frequently Utilized Interventions by Participating Hospitals

Specific Intervention	Percentage of Hospitals (n=91)
Staff Education on Normal Labor	98%
Sharing Unblinded Provider NTSV Rate	85%
Labor Dystocia Checklist	65%
Peanut Balls for Positional Support in Labor	53%
Active Phase Huddle	45%
Changes in Latent Labor Management	45%
Patient Education During Labor	45%
Induction Scheduling Form	34%
Doula Program	33%
Patient Support after Traumatic Birth Experience	26%
Electronic Medical Record Order Sets	24%
Induction of Labor Algorithm	22%
Cervical Ripening in Outpatient Setting	19%
Changes in 2nd Stage Management	18%
Coping with Labor Algorithm	10%
Introduction of Laborists	8%
Childbirth Education in Prenatal Period	8%
Introduction of Midwives	4%
Use of Nitrous Oxide	4%

Adapted from: Rosenstein MG, Chang SC, Sakowski C, et al. Hospital Quality Improvement Interventions, Statewide Policy Initiatives, and Rates of Cesarean Delivery for Nulliparous, Term, Singleton, Vertex Births in California. *JAMA*. Apr 27 2021;325(16):1631-1639. Image source: CMQCC Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans

#### Cesarean Disparities by Race and Ethnicity

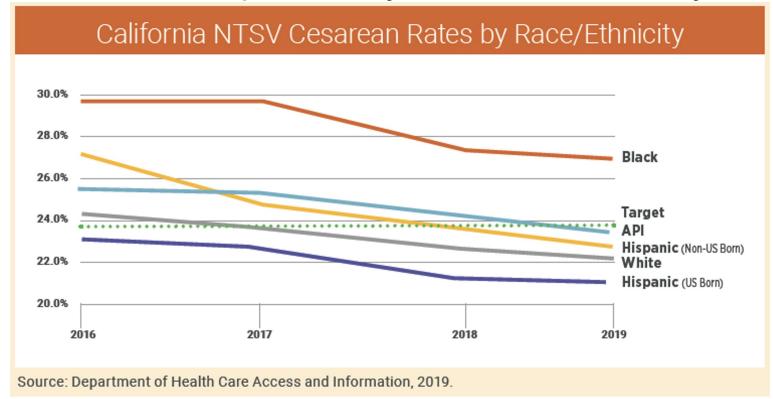


Image source: CMQCC Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans

## **Birth Equity**

### Birth Equ·i·ty /noun/

1. The assurance of the **conditions** of optimal births for all people with a **willingness** to address **racial and social inequalities** in a **sustained** effort.

- Aspirational
- Constant gardening (no one-offs)
- Emotional Intelligence
- Radical Empathy
- Innovative thinking
- Deconstructing harmful power centers
- Systems change
- Consider upstream social determinants of health
- Deal with health-related social needs
- Requires us to break our bias and destigmatize
- Trauma-informed



#### Typical Clinical Quality Improvement Efforts

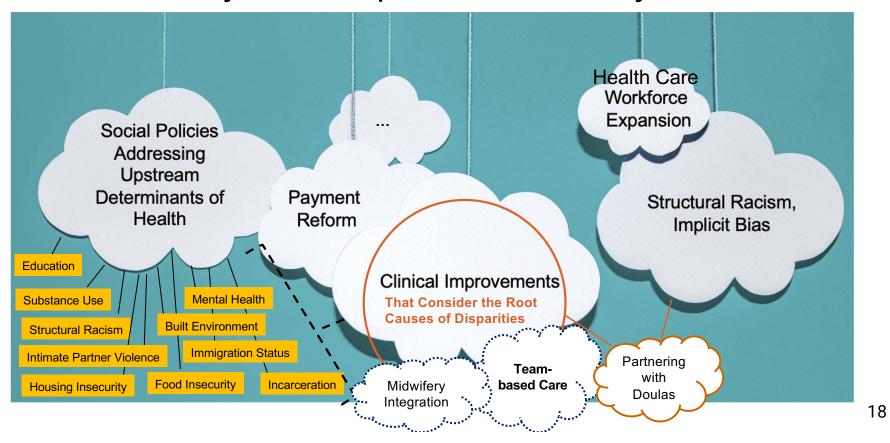
Outcome-oriented Cookie Cutter processes Concrete measurable data sets Target goals that are "good enough" Low-hanging fruit Start and stop Behavior change but not hearts and minds



#### The Work Must Be Intentional...

- Utilize strategies that consider the root causes of disparities
- Consider community needs/wants in our approaches to quality improvement (patient and community-centeredness)
- Incorporate improvement measures that evaluate respect, dignity, and implicit bias in childbirth
- Humility to accept that what we are doing right now isn't working for everyone
- Use all the tools in the toolbox, not just the easy low-hanging strategies

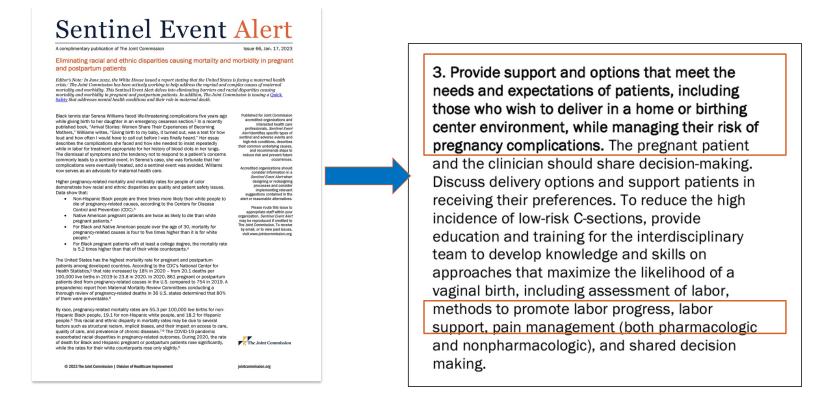
#### Maternity Care Improvement Ecosystem



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The Joint Commission



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#### Doulas as Essential Changemakers in Birth Outcomes

"Published data indicate that one of **the most effective tools** to improve labor and delivery outcomes is the continuous presence of support personnel, such as a doula... Given that there are no associated measurable harms, this resource is probably underutilized."

– ACOG/SMFM Obstetric Care Consensus on the Safe Prevention of Primary Cesarean Delivery

#### **MARCH OF DIMES POSITION STATEMENT DOULAS AND BIRTH OUTCOMES**

#### Summary and Purpose

Consistent with its mission to fight for the health of all moms and babies, March of Dimes issued a <u>lay</u> 2018 Position Statement on Maternal Moralay and Moralay, released a report on maternity care description of the statement of the statement of the statement of the statement of all description of the statement of the statement of the statement of Davias and Birl Automent and all descriptions of the statement of the statement of Davias and Birl Automents will be part of a broader March O Dimes approach to these issues that is under development. It provides evidence and guidance to asympt March O Dimes and provide part of the statement of Davias and Birl Automents related to toolai care is they arise nationally and to facing. It also can serve as an education tood doub the importance of doubies as a part of the birth lessor.

In summary, this document states that:

- March of Dimes supports increased access to doula care as one tool to help improve birth outcomes and reduce the higher rates of maternal morbidity and mortality among women of color in the United States.
- March of Dimes advocates for all pavers to provide coverage for doula services. March of Dimes recognizes the importance of increased training, support and capacity development for doulas, including doulas from racially, ethnically, socioeconomically and culturally diverse communities.

Introduction

Doubs are non-clinical professionals who provide physical, emotional and informational support to mothers before, during and after childrahi, including continuous lator support. "So precent of there is no relative estimate of the number of duals in the U.S. a. centralized online duals registration service, not affliated with any one certifying organization, had 9.000 registered duals in 2018.

Studies suggest that increased access to dould care, especially in under-resourced communities, can improve a range of health outcomes for mothers and babies, lower healthcare costs, reduce - existenci (esseran accession), decrease matternal anakey and depression, and help improve communication between low-income, racially/ethnically diverse programt women and ther health care providers.

The role of douls care in reducing c-sections is important, because c-sections contribute to the risk of maternal morbidly and mortality in initial and subsequent pregnancies. March of Dimes supports increased access to douls are as one too to help improve birth outcomes and reduce the higher rates of maternal morbidly and mortality among women of color in the United States.

Doula support is not routinely covered by health insurance. Since one of the barriers to having doula support is cost, insurance coverage for doula support through Medicaid, the Children's

#### **Community-Based Doulas and Midwives**

Key to Addressing the U.S. Maternal Health Crisis

By Nora Ellmann April 2020

Improving Our Maternity Care Now Through Doula Support

national pertremitip for women & families

HEALTH





#### **ACOG COMMITTEE OPINION**

Number 766

(Replaces Committee Opinion No. 687, February 2017)

Committee on Obstetric Practice

he American College of Nurse-Midwives endorses this document. This Committee Opinion was developed by the Committee on Obstetric Practice in slaboration with committee members Allison S. Bryant, MD, MPH and Ann E. Borders, MD, MSc, MPH.

Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth

ABSTRACT: Obstetrician-gynecologists, in collaboration with midwives, nurses, patients, and those who support them in labor, can help women meet the goals for labor and birth by using techniques that require minimal interventions and have high rates of patient statisfaction. Many common obsertior practices are of limited or uncertain benefit for Vorvisia. women in spontaneous labor. For women who are in latent labor and are not admitted to the labor unit, a process of shared decision making is recommended to oreate a plan for self-care activities and coping techniques. Admission durity the latent phase of labor may be necessary for a variety of reasons, including pain management or maternal fatigue.

To regular nursing care, continuous one-to-one emotional support provided by support ciated with improved outcomes for women in labor. Data suggest that for women with p evidence of fetal compromise, routine anniotomy need not be undertaken unless he widespread use of continuous electronic fetal monitoring has not been shown to as perinatal death and cerebral palsy when used for women with low-risk pregnancies. armacologic techniques can be used to help women cope with labor pain. Women in nay not require routine continuous infusion of intravenous fluids. For most women, no d or proscribed. Obstetrician-gynecologists and other obstetric care providers should be w-interventional approaches, when appropriate, for the intrapartum management of low-r. Birthing units should carefully consider adding family-centric interventions that are control and a final accounting to detail during with the province meta-final counting and a final counting of the set ation on a family-centered approach to cesarean birth.

<b>Conclusions</b> tricians and Gynecolo- ving recommendations n in spontaneous labor	<ul> <li>Admission to labor and delivery may be delayed for women in the latent phase of labor when their status and their fetuses' status are reassuring. The women can be offered frequent contact and support, as well as nonpharmacologic pain management measures.</li> </ul>
ition, labor management	<ul> <li>When women are observed or admitted for pain or</li></ul>
nding on maternal and	fatigue in latent labor, techniques such as education
include techniques such	and support, oral hydration, positions of comfort, and

and nonpharmacologic

Y 2019

are observed or admitted for pain or fatigue in latent labor, techniques such as education and support, oral hydration, positions of comfort, and nonpharmacologic pain management techniques such as massage or water immersion may be beneficial.

**OBSTETRICS & GYNECOLOGY** 

#### **Doulas Have Been Present Throughout History**



Various Historical Depictions of Birth with Labor Support



#### What is a Doula?

- A doula is a trained, non-medical professional who supports and protects the patients physical, emotional, and informational needs during labor
- Doulas also have an important teaching and advocacy role during pregnancy, labor, and **postpartum**
- Some doulas provide support during/after miscarriage or abortion
- There are even "end-of-life doulas" who support people in hospice or other times as they prepare for end-of-life

#### Four Key Roles for Doulas



- They provide information about childbirth and foster communication between birthing women and people and members of the care team.
- They **play an advocacy role**, helping birthing women and people to achieve their desired experiences.
- They provide practical support, through drug-free comfort measures (e.g., with inflatable "birth balls," hot and cold packs, and position changes) and hands-on support (e.g., massage and acupressure).
- They **provide emotional support** for confidence and a sense of control.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Toolkit Resources: Elements of Doula Care**

#### What Doulas Do

#### Teaching

- Prenatal teaching & childbirth ed; lactation and infant feeding

#### Physical comfort care and support

- Labor support and coping
- Support for epidural & comfort care for breakthrough pain
- Patient positioning to assist fetal descent and rotation
- Typically remain with the patient throughout labor & "Golden Hour"

#### Patient Advocacy

- Bridge between patient and providers
- Culturally congruent advocacy & informational assistance
- Preserve & support respectful care, privacy, and dignity
- Connection to social resources

#### **Postpartum Support and Connections to Care**

- Lactation during "Golden Hour;" infant feeding & care
- Recognition of postpartum symptoms that need attention
- Connection to social resources as needed

#### What Doulas Do Not Do

- Provide clinical or nursing care
  - Physical assessments
  - Catching the baby
  - Fetal monitoring
  - Medication administration
- Diagnose or give medical advice
- Make decisions for the patient or pressure the patient into certain decisions
- Leave the patient during labor

#### **Benefits of Doula Care**

Less likely with a doula	More likely with a doula
<ul> <li>Cesarean birth</li> <li>Operative vaginal birth</li> <li>Need for oxytocin</li> <li>Epidural anesthesia</li> <li>Use of pain medication</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Spontaneous vaginal birth</li> <li>Shorter labor</li> <li>Higher APGAR scores</li> <li>Breastfeeding initiation</li> <li>Patient-centered care</li> <li>Positive birth experience</li> <li>Lower cost</li> </ul>

"In comparison with women receiving no continuous labor support, women with doula support were an impressive 39 percent less likely to have a cesarean birth"

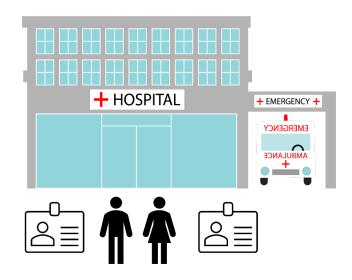
Image source: CMQCC Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans

Quote Source: Continuous Support for Women During Childbirth: 2017 Cochrane Review Update Key Takeaways. J Perinat Educ. Oct 2018;27(4):193-197. doi:10.1891/1058-1243.27.4.193



#### Toolkit Resources: Types of Doula Programs

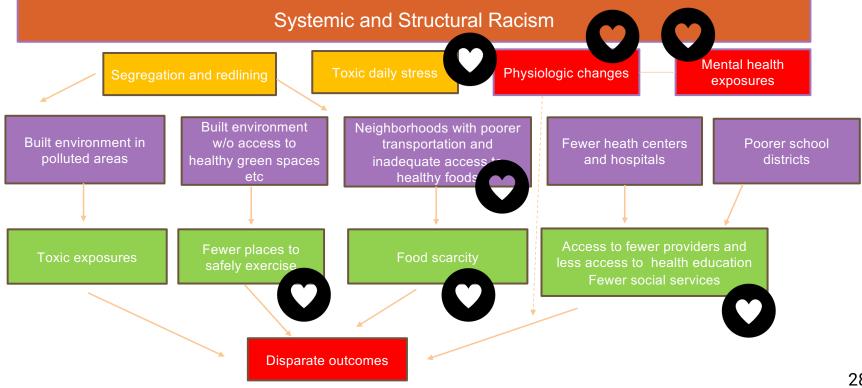
**Hospital-Based Doulas** 



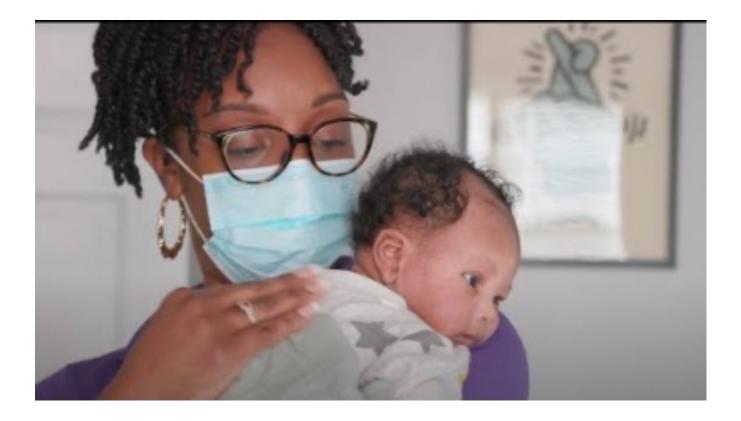
Community Doulas and Doula Collectives



#### Understanding Systemic Racism and Disparate Birth Outcomes is Critical to Understanding Community Doulas in Modern Times









#### **Toolkit Strategies for Partnering with Doulas**



Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans A Quality Improvement Toolkit

#### CMQCC

#### Key Strategies for Integrating Doulas Into the Birth Care Team 2 Clinical Strategies

#### 1 Administrative Strategies

 Foster a departmental culture that values physiologic birth and reduced intervention for normal, low-risk birthing people continuous liber support, and practices such as intermittent suscultation, mobility in labor, continuous liber support, and preserving the patient-fably dyal Resources include: Work together with local doula organizations to provide consistent,

accessible support and resources to families

 Explore the feasibility of establishing a hospital-based doula program at your facility that prioritizes a doula workforce

that reflects the community being served Even if your hospital already has a doula program, do not prevent or restrict the ability of patients to bring their own doula

 All doulas – whether community-based or hospital volunteers – should be empowered to remain independent champions for patients

 Hospital policies should reflect Hospital policies should reflect that doulas are not "visitors" in the traditional sense (specifically, they should not bound by time limits or other visitor rules that would restrict their ability to remain with the patient)

 Section II of this toolkit ACNM's Pearls of Physiologic Birth ACOG's Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth

Connect with community-based doula
 Connect with community-based doula
 complement to technical and medical skill sets

program and second community-based doulds at your facility Establish expectations for how providers, nurses, and doulds interact and support each other, and consistently model collegial rapport and open communication Develop unit quidelines or educational materials that delineate a mutual understanding of roles and invite local doulas to help create these materials

 Share these materials with nurses and providers and invite local community groups to share the materials widely with other doulas and patients For facilities with hospital-based doula programs, posting this informat at the bedside may help patients to understand the role of their doula

 Foster a culture of patient-centered care that values shared decision making and autonomy and the understanding that doulas are there to consistently advocate on behalf of the patient

 Engage in mutual learning at the time of clinical interaction. Doulas and nurses can learn an
 enormous amount from each other, and patients also benefit from this shared interaction · Some doulas desire to learn more abor

 Doulas can teach evidence-based, culturally informed tec that are not often taught in traditional medical and nursing training

· Update policies to include doulas as support people in the operating room if the patient desires

#### 3 Educational Strategies

 Department educational opportunities should include a deeper dive into the components
 and strategies for successful team-based care that incorporate doulas as part of the team Create expanded opportunities for department-wide interprofessional education that includes doublas from your community or a doula organization with whom you have a relationship Debrief about - and learn from - normal\_physiologic birth where doula care was or could

have been, pivotal in the patient's progress and outcome

Ensure that provider and nursing education includes racism-based disparities in maternity care, implicit bias, and an understanding of the role of doula care in curbing this trend

- Administrative Strategies
- **Clinical Strategies**
- **Educational Strategies**

#### Toolkit Strategies for Partnering with Doulas (continued)

- Doulas at your facility are empowered to remain independent champions for patients
- Policies reflect that doulas are not "visitors" bound by time limits or other visitor rules
- ✓ Updated policies to include doulas as support people in the operating room
- Intentionally cultivating a culture on the birthing unit that values physiologic birth and patient choice
- Connect to community-based doula programs & welcome community-based doulas at your facility
- Creating opportunities for interprofessional education that includes doulas from your community or a doula organization with whom you have forged a relationship



\*More strategies in toolkit!



Doulas are Part of the Team

- An integral part of supportive care for the patient
- Same goal same team!
- Because the patient says so

## Doulas in California

- Medi-Cal doula benefit
- Various pilot projects and doula research
- Community doula programs across the state
- Growing popularity of hospital programs

Amazing Resource! NHeLP Doula Medicaid Project Website



#### ALL PREGNANT AND POSTPARTUM PEOPLE DESERVE ACCES TO FULL SPECTRUM DOULA CARE.

NATIONAL HEALTH LAW PROGRAM

https://healthlaw.org/doulamedicaidproject/



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#### **California Doula Pilots Lessons Learned Project**

From October to November 2021, the National Health Law Program's Doula Medicaid Project conducted interviews with doulas, fur administrative staff involved with at least ten doula pilot programs in California with a primary focus on addressing racial health disp particular on providing free doula services to either Black pregnant and birthing people or Medicaid enrollees. Overall, we found the share remarkable consistency across some broader themes. At the same time, on a more granular level, the doula pilots have been from one another, with different funding structures, scope of care provided, recruitment plans, training requirements, etc. On Janua Doula Medicaid Project held a panel discussion with representatives from six of the interviewed doula pilot programs.

What follows are a set of publications and resources that we have created from our interviews, conversations, and panel discussion. We hope that in compiling and sharing out the experience and expertise of those involved in these doula pilots can help to inform the rollout and implementation of California's statewide doula Medicaid benefit. We also hope can be beleful for doulas and advocates in other states across the country who are setting up similar doula pilot programs or expansions of doula care in their own regions.

- Summaries of California Doula Pilot Programs
- Challenges Reported by California Doula Pilot Programs
- Lessons Learned from California Doula Pilot Programs
- [WATCH] Doulas Know Best Lessons Learned from California's Doula Pilot Programs Panel Discussion
- [WATCH] Time-lapse of Visual Recording by Ashanti Gardner
- [View] Visual Recording by visual scribe Ashanti Gardner
- Q&A from Doulas Know Best

**Access the Project** 



Birthworkers of Color

September 7 Medi-Cal Doula Basics 5-7 p.m. PST

Part1

Part 2 September 14 Medi-Cal Doula Deep Dive 5-7 p.m. PST

#### **Register**

Join Us for a 2-Part

**Medi-Cal Doula Benefit** 

**O**rientation

Bring your questions and gain insight on:

-How to become a doula

-A doula's scope of work

-How to become a Medi-Cal doula

-Training and support for Medi-Cal doulas

When:



https://us02web.zoom.us/meetin g/register/tZYkfuGsqD0sGN3EKW H5RNbuwzKUA4DnO72m

Black Infants & Families A Los Angeles County AAIMM Prevention Initiative COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES Public Health Doula Benefit Orientation 2-Part Series Sept 7: Basics Sept 14: Deep Dive

#### **Other Resources**

CMQCC Webinar
 Incorporating Doulas into Your
 Hospital

CMQCC Webinar
 UCSD Volunteer Doula
 Program: A Model for
 Integration in a Hospital
 Setting

YouTube video UCSD
 Volunteer Doula Program







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#### **Final Webinar in This Series!**

#### **Community Birth - Improving Transfer of Care**

Oct 25, 2023 12pm-130pm



#### **CMQCC** Clinical Leads and Data Center



Data questions

datacenter@cmqcc.org

Clinical improvement questions or questions about toolkit

<u>csakowski@cmqcc.org</u>

Questions about midwifery integration and doula care

holly@midwiferyrising.org



#### **Panelist Discussion**



#### References

- Smith H, Peterson N, Lagrew D, Main E. 2016. Part V. Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth and Reduce Primary Cesareans: A Quality Improvement Toolkit. Stanford, CA: California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative.
- Specific references available upon request
- References for Part V of the *Toolkit to Support Vaginal Birth* begin on page 188, starting with reference #339