

MEDI-CAL ENROLLEES DESERVE DOULA CARE; DOULAS DESERVE A LIVING WAGE

Most doulas working today are paid by their clients out of pocket. The cost for their services range from several hundred dollars to over \$2000, with the cost in California averaging around \$1200-\$1500. In some cases, people are able to access health care flexible spending accounts, or FSAs, to defray the cost of doula care. However, very few private health insurance plans cover doula care.

The high cost of doulas, coupled with the lack of coverage in public and private health plans, means that many pregnant and postpartum people, especially those who are low-income, are unable to afford the cost of doula care. Yet we know that doulas can have a profound impact on both maternal and infant health, helping lead to [reductions in preterm and cesarean births](#), and [improved breastfeeding rates](#). The expansion of full spectrum doula care to all pregnant and postpartum Medi-Cal enrollees could have a huge impact in California, given that [half of all births in the state](#) are funded by Medi-Cal.

Additionally, doulas deserve to be fairly and equitably compensated for their labor. According to results from our survey, 55% of doulas reported that they provided their services on a volunteer or pro bono basis, meaning they did not receive any compensation for the hours they spent providing support, guidance, and education to pregnant and postpartum people and their families. This is not sustainable and contributes to the high rate of turnover and burnout in the doula profession, as it means that doulas have to split their time in this work with other paid work to support themselves.

Supported by the California Health Care Foundation (CHCF), which works to ensure that people have access to the care they need, when they need it, at a price they can afford. Visit www.chcf.org to learn more.



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

Doulas have the potential to help reduce overall maternal care spending on unnecessary medical procedures and pregnancy complications. By providing fair and equitable compensation to doulas, California could ensure that coverage of doula care for pregnant and postpartum Medi-Cal enrollees is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive. To adequately support pregnant and postpartum Medi-Cal enrollees, we must also support the doulas who provide care to them.



This is fact sheet #3 in a series of three fact sheets about Medi-Cal coverage for doula care. Read our full report at <https://healthlaw.org/resource/doulareport>.