



NHeLP's Doula Medicaid Resource Library

Key Resources Shortlist

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This document was compiled by National Health Law Program summer 2024 intern, Kavisha Prajapati. To learn more about NHeLP's Doula Medicaid Project and to see our full Doula Medicaid Resource Library, see healthlaw.org/doulamedicaidproject

Case studies of state doula efforts and/or pilot programs:

- Best Practices for Medicaid Coverage of Doula Care by National Health Law Program (forthcoming)
- [Key Learnings from the Doula and Perinatal Community Health Worker in Medicaid Learning Series](#) by Every Mother Counts and Institute for Medicaid Innovation (October 2023): This report synthesizes takeaways from a series of virtual sessions from nationwide healthcare experts engaged in doula work about designing and implementing Medicaid benefits and community-based perinatal support. It is for all desiring to learn more, but especially for Medicaid stakeholders seeking an evidence-based roadmap to reduce perinatal disparities and improve birth equity.
- [Leveraging Medicaid Policy to Advance Doula Care](#) by Maternal Health Learning and Innovation Center (December 2023): This issue brief provides examples of states that have made doula care a covered Medicaid benefit and lessons from doula partnership programs in California and Washington. Its intended audience is decisionmakers in states exploring ways to implement Medicaid-covered doula care.
- [Doulas in Medicaid: Case Study Findings](#) by MACPAC - Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission (December 2022): By exploring how six Medicaid agencies approached doula coverage decisions, this brief is a practical guide on developing strategies that responds to doula and member needs and achieves Medicaid goals. It is intended for states that are pursuing doula coverage under Medicaid.
- [California Doula Pilots Lessons Learned Project](#) by National Health Law Program (2022): This set of resources offers the experience and expertise of doulas, funders, and administrative staff at 10 doula pilot programs across California to help doulas and advocates across the country set up similar doula pilot programs.

Benefits of doula care:

- [Maternal Wellness in a Changing Climate: Doulas' Vital Perspectives](#) by RH Impact (May 2024): This report provides the results of a qualitative nation-wide survey to better understand how to support community-based doulas and other perinatal health workers in incorporating environmental health and justice in their work. The report also offers recommendations to healthcare providers, community leaders, grant-makers, and the U.S. federal government, on how to mitigate impacts of the climate crisis on mothers.
- [Community-Based Doulas: A Proven Solution to Improve Perinatal Outcomes](#) by Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center (April 2023): This brief report synthesizes information from various studies to illustrate the benefits of doula care on prenatal behavioral choices, birth outcomes, child-parent relationships, and child health and development.
- [“Our Communities Hold the Solutions”: The Importance of Full-Spectrum Doulas to Reproductive Health and Justice](#) by National Partnership for Women & Families (October 2022): This report contextualizes doula care in a post-Roe v. Wade society and relays the history of the reproductive justice movement. It uses research and doula testimony to emphasize that doulas help navigate challenges in and beyond reproductive life, and to provide policy recommendations for Congress and decisionmakers in the private sector.
- [Improving Our Maternity Care Now Through Doula Support](#) by National Partnership for Women & Families, HealthConnect One, Tewa Women United, and National Health Law Program (September 2022): This report contributes to discourse on birth justice by highlighting doula support in the U.S., especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and a post-Roe v. Wade society. It offers recommendations for policymakers, as well as an advocacy toolkit and successful organizations to take note of.
- [Doula Care Improves Health Outcomes, Reduces Racial Disparities and Cuts Cost](#) by National Health Law Program (August 2022): This article summarizes the range of benefits that come from providing doula care, ending with a call to action for state Medicaid agencies and private insurers to design doula coverage programs that span the full spectrum of doula care.
- [Community-Based Doulas State Policy Road Map](#) by Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center (October 2023): This publication describes community-based doulas, the scope of services that they provide, and the various benefits and positive impacts of their care.

Cost-benefit analyses of doula care:

- [A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Doula Care from a Public Health Framework](#) by Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health (January 2024): Using public health and reproductive justice frameworks to analyze cost-effectiveness of doula care coverage, this comprehensive report addresses the costs and benefits of doula care through the consideration of health equity and social determinants of health. The report appendix includes an explanation on how to duplicate the cost savings analyses for your own state or region.
- [The Cost-Effectiveness of Professional Doula Care for a Woman's First Two Births: A Decision Analysis Model](#) by Greiner, K. S., et al. in the Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health (2019): This research study compares the health outcomes of women with doulas versus women without doula support, concluding that doula care during the first birth can lead to improved health outcomes due to overall fewer cesarean births, maternal deaths, hysterectomies, and uterine ruptures, and improved QALYs.
- [Modeling the cost-effectiveness of doula care associated with reductions in preterm birth and cesarean delivery](#) by Kozhimannil, K. et al. in BIRTH (March 2016): This research study analyzes routinely collected birthing data from the north central regions of the U.S. to fill in gaps of prior research literature to study the association between prenatal doula support and preterm birth. It concludes that prenatal doula care lowers odds of preterm birth, reduces risk of cesarean delivery, and has cost-effective benefits on healthcare costs.
- [Doula care, birth outcomes, and costs among Medicaid beneficiaries](#) by Kozhimannil, K. B., et al. in American Journal of Public Health (April 2013): This research study evaluates childbirth related outcomes for Medicaid recipients who received prenatal education and childbirth support from trained doulas compared to those who did not. Though their sample size is limited to Minnesota, their estimates suggest that providing doula care for Medicaid recipients can be a cost-saving and life-improving action.

Importance of sustainable and equitable reimbursement for doulas:

- [Changing the Narrative: The Doula Medicaid Reimbursement Storybook](#) by HealthConnect One (April 2023): This narrative storybook project provides first-hand testimony from doulas around not only their work, but also the barriers they experience to getting fairly reimbursed by Medicaid programs, such as inconsistent payments, rejected claims, and a disproportionate ratio between the rate of pay and time spent providing their services.
- [Getting Doulas Paid Policy Brief: Advancing Community-Based Doula Models In Medicaid Reimbursement Conversations](#) by HealthConnect One, SisterWeb, BirthMatters, Accompany Doula Care, and Ancient Song Doula Services (February 2023): This policy brief summarizes the need for dignified compensation for doula services and advocates for community-based doula models, both of which are means to advancing birth justice particularly for under-resourced Black, brown, and Indigenous communities. It offers recommendations on how to ensure fair compensation in Medicaid program partnerships.
- [Medi-Cal Coverage for Doula Care Requires Sustainable and Equitable Reimbursement to be Successful](#) by National Health Law Program (May 2022): Using SB 65, the California Momnibus, as a starting point, this article argues for the need for equitable and sustainable reimbursement rates by tackling misconceptions around doula work and showing that low reimbursement rates result in low doula participation in state Medicaid programs.
- [Advancing Birth Justice: Community-Based Doula Models as a Standard of Care for Ending Racial Disparities](#) by Ancient Song Doula Services, Village Birth International, and Every Mother Counts (March 2019): This resource defines the model of community-based doula care, outlines the positive relationship between doula care and health outcomes, and analyzes the benefits and shortcomings of New York's pilot doula Medicaid program.

Supporting the doula workforce:

- [2023 Doula Time Use Study](#) by Doula Data Consortium (2023): This study summarizes findings from a survey that provides insights into doula care activities beyond conventional direct client care in order to sound a call to action for improved payment structures that honor doulas' time commitment and invaluable contributions.
- [Birth Worker Burnout: Exploring Integrative Approaches to Nurturing a Healthy Doula Workforce](#) by Mama Glow Foundation (2022): This brief contributes to the conversation on increasing access to doula care by shedding light on doula worker burnout, underscoring the need for nurturing a healthy doula workforce, and addressing structural barriers that exacerbate poor working conditions for birth workers.
- [Creating Policy for Equitable Doula Access](#) by HealthConnect One (2019): This policy report provides an overarching view of the challenges addressing maternal mortality, the role of community-based doula care programs, obstacles to equitable reimbursement and coverage policies, and state and federal actions towards access to doula services.
- [Sustainable Funding for Doula Programs](#) by HealthConnect One (2017): This survey evaluates sustainable funding opportunities for community-based doula organizations, identifies potential funding streams, and includes information from a survey on the structure of existing doula programs.

Improving hospital, clinical, and medical provider relationships with doulas:

- [Hospital Doula-Friendliness Guidebook](#) by New York Health Department's Maternity Hospital Quality Improvement Network (August 2024): This Guidebook has best practices, as well as tips and lessons learned from findings from the Maternity Hospital Quality Improvement Network. It also includes appendices with a literature review of doula-effectiveness studies, a list of doula organizations in New York City and New York State, a sample doula-friendly policy, and a letter modeling doula-friendly communication.
- [Guide for Hospital Doula Policy Creation](#) by NJ Health Care Quality Institute; Healthconnect One; NJ Doula Learning Collaborative (June 2024): This resource guide provides recommendations on implementation of hospital doula policy, such as internal medical education on doulas, processes for allowing doulas to enter the hospital, and guidelines for a doula liaison, among other best practice considerations on integrating doulas into a health system.
- [Best Practices for Hospital-Doula Relations](#) by Hoda Shawky, et al. (March 2024): This resource offers suggestions for creating a doula-inclusive birthing care team through four key principles aimed to uplift the doula-patient relationship within a hospital.
- [Connecticut Doula Integration Toolkit](#) by Primary Maternity Care (August 2023): This toolkit provides a breadth of resources for clinical providers and doulas to support the integration of doula services into a healthcare team. Resources include best practices for doula policy, fee schedules and fee reporting forms, and patient evaluation surveys.
- [Summary: "An extra layer my best self": Healthcare provider perspectives on doula care](#) by Reiley Reed, et al. (June 2023): Based on a study evaluating doula care, this resource spotlights healthcare providers' perspectives on working with doulas in the hospital and tips for communications between doulas and medical providers. The full paper on which this summary is based is available [here](#).
- [Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence](#) by National Partnership for Women & Families (March 2023): This comprehensive guide offers history, facts, and reasoning for why healthcare institutions need to improve maternal health outcomes and a range of actionable items on how to do so. Their approaches revolve around providing whole-person care, employing a diverse workforce, partnering with most-impacted communities, and investing in maternal health equity.



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