

Re: Investing in the Doula Workforce

Dear Senator Wiklund, Representative Liebling, and Conferees,

Together, we stand in support of increasing medical assistance reimbursement rates for doula services and to advocate for doulas to be directly reimbursed for their services without an NPI number. Investing in the doula workforce is an important strategy to increase access to the critical services that are proven to improve equity in Minnesota's maternal and child health outcomes.

Minnesota's first Maternal Mortality report shows that Black and Native birthing people, and their babies, are more than twice as likely to die due to pregnancy and birth complications in this state. Community doulas are proven to decrease the number of these fatal complications, improve health outcomes, increase breastfeeding rates, reducing childbirth complications, and reestablish the historically exploitative relationship between marginalized communities and the medical establishment.

As of 2022, four out of ten births in Minnesota were covered by Medicaid. Black and Native birthing patients make up a disproportionate percentage of this population. Although the Black and Native population stands to gain the most from receiving doula services during the pregnancy, birthing, and postpartum period, many doulas do not serve patients on Medicaid due to the excessively low reimbursement rates and overcomplicated billing process

Increasing reimbursement rates for doula services will increase access to culturally responsive care among Medicaid eligible birthing people and improve racial equity and health outcomes for all birthing people in Minnesota.

We can't address all negative effects of the historical trauma through any one strategy, but we can do more to support African American and Native people have healthy pregnancies and babies. We believe all pregnant people in Minnesota deserve to feel supported during their perinatal care. Please join us in supporting the doula workforce, to support the workforce promoting healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes, and healthy babies.

Thank you,



**Organizations in Support of Investing in the Doula Workforce:**

ÀBĪYÈ Collective

The Birth Equity Community Council

The Childbirth Collective

Community Aware Birthworker

Doulas of Duluth

Everyday Miracles

HealthPartners

Heather Christine Holistic Continuum

Little Moments Count

Loving Journey Pregnancy Services

Minnesota Council of Health Plans

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition

Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting

Northside Achievement Zone

Oily Doula

UCare

Wilder African American Babies Coalition & Projects