

State Efforts to Expand Access to Doula Care

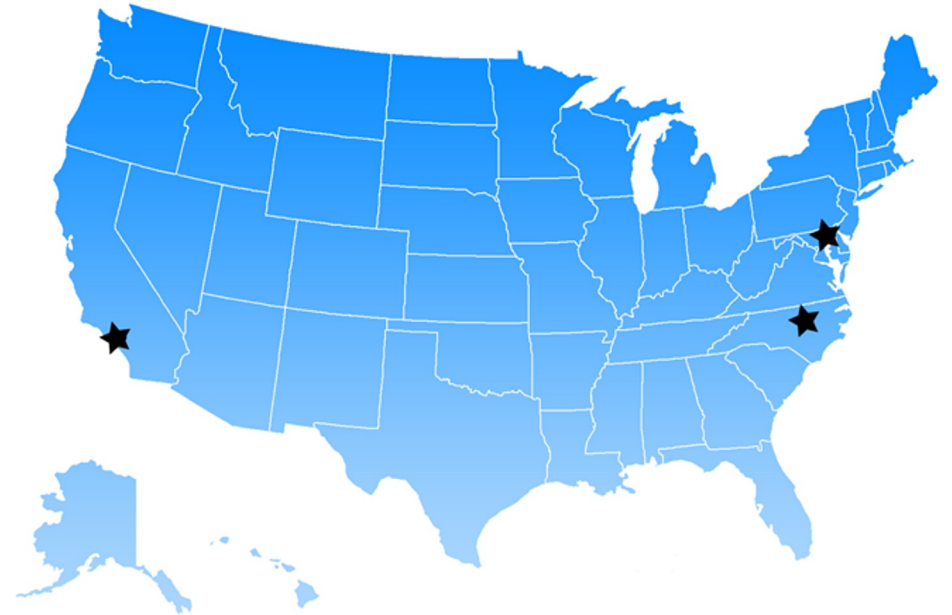
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About the National Health Law Program

- National non-profit law firm committed to protecting health care + improving health rights
- Offices in CA, NC, DC
- Partners in all 50 states and Washington DC
- www.healthlaw.org



What is a doula?

- Doulas are birth workers who provide health education; advocacy; and physical, emotional, and nonmedical support through different aspects of reproductive health
- Doulas can provide care before, during, and after childbirth or the end of a pregnancy, as well as support during miscarriage, stillbirth, and abortion
- Doulas do not provide medical care; rather they provide additional support in contexts where medical providers cannot or do not

Benefits of doula care

- Need to address maternal mortality crisis in the U.S.
- Extensive research indicates that doula care improves maternal and infant health outcomes, increases care quality, and can lead to cost savings
- Doulas support their clients with individually tailored, culturally appropriate, and patient-centered care and advocacy

Accessibility of Doula Care

- High cost of doula care (\$1000-\$3000+)
- Low-income pregnant and birthing people are:
 - at higher risk for poor birth outcomes
 - less likely to be able to afford doula care out-of-pocket
- Medi-Cal covers close to 40% of births nationally

Doula Medicaid Project

- Expanding access to doula care with Medicaid enrollees as a starting point
- Identifying and overcoming barriers to sustainable, equitable, and inclusive programs for Medicaid coverage for doula care
- Focus on full spectrum doula care
- Supporting work of Black doulas, community-based doulas, and doulas serving low-income clients



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

<https://healthlaw.org/doulamedicaidproject/>

National Landscape of Doula Medicaid Coverage



- ★ States actively providing coverage
- ★ States in process of implementation
- ★ States with related or adjacent action

<https://tinyurl.com/NHeLPStateTracker>

How are States Implementing Coverage?

- Legislation
- State budget
- State Medicaid Agencies

Trends to Watch

- Focus on sustainable and equitable reimbursement rates
- Making doula care universal – efforts to expand access to doula care in private insurance
- Self-organization of doula groups, co-ops, and associations

Recommendations

- Best practices document: email chen@healthlaw.org
- Listen to the doulas! Community-based doula groups, including BIPOC doulas and BIPOC led doula groups, must be equal partners in the implementation
- Don't reinvent the wheel -- learn from each other



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