

TRUSTED CONNECTIONS: THE ROLE OF DOULAS IN ADVANCING COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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OUR TEAM

Together, Averjill and Angela have over 30 years of experience in perinatal health. Our robust backgrounds span from employee benefits expertise, state medicaid doula benefit projects, policy assessment, policy development, strategic planning, advocacy, evaluation, and providing full-spectrum, individualized, client-centered support during the childbearing years.



DOULA LANDSCAPE OUR STORY


- The Pandemic's and doulas
 - Exposing how essential doula support is for families
- Re-entering facilities
 - Restoring relationships and navigating requirements
- Access and standardization
 - Closing the gaps
- Connecting with champions for change
 - Partnering to create hallmarks and structure to support cultural shifts



WHAT IS A DOULA

Trained non-medical support for the birthing person throughout the perinatal period.




SPECTRUM OF DOULA CARE



- Fertility
- Termination of Pregnancy
- Miscarriage
- Birth
- Postpartum
- Bereavement

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

What does trained non-medical support look like?



- Physical Support
- Emotional Support
- Educational Support
- Partner Support
- Advocacy

DOULA RESEARCH – CLINICAL OUTCOMES

47%

Lower risk of
cesarean delivery

29%

Lower risk of
preterm birth

46%

More likely to attend
postpartum visit

- Multi-state Medicaid study (2014–2023) found doulas significantly reduced cesarean delivery, preterm birth, and severe maternal morbidity. Women with doulas were 46% more likely to attend postpartum follow-up (Kozhimannil et al., AJPH 2024)
- Scoping review of 23 studies confirmed doula support reduces cesarean rates, preterm births, labor duration, and pain while enhancing breastfeeding.
- Doula support linked to reduced postpartum depression and anxiety, improved breastfeeding success, and greater maternal autonomy in birth decisions (Sobczak et al., Cureus 2023; Lemon et al., AJOG 2025)

DOULA LANDSCAPE – DOULA COVERAGE



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

14

**DOULA-PROVIDER
PARTNERSHIPS**

**A TRUSTED
VOICE IN
EVERY
PREGNANCY**

Doulas as community connectors
for immunization education



CONTINUOUS, TRUSTED PRESENCE

Doulas build relationships early in pregnancy, sustaining engagement through birth and postpartum, far beyond the clinical visit.



CULTURALLY GROUNDED SUPPORT

As community insiders, doulas bridge cultural gaps and foster space for informed conversations about immunization.



COMPLEMENTING CLINICAL CARE

Doulas reinforce, not replace provider guidance, strengthening communication between clients and their care teams.

*Expanding Medicaid & private coverage creates new partnership opportunities.
The window is now.*

OUR WORK

Building connections that expand doula recognition, hospital collaboration, and community health outcomes.

Successfully launched **UF Health Shands (Gainesville, FL)** as the nation's first hospital to earn the **Doula Friendly Designated Hospital™** status — with 2 more South Florida facilities scheduled to follow this summer.

KEY COLLABORATIONS

American College of
● Obstetricians &
Gynecologists (ACOG)

Assoc. of Women's Health,
● Obstetric & Neonatal
Nurses (AWHONN)

● National Collaborative for
Infants & Toddlers (NCIT)

Florida Perinatal Health
● Quality Initiative (FPHQI)
& additional partners



*Collaboration deepens understanding,
strengthens policy support, and builds the
foundation for lasting systemic change.*

FROM OPPORTUNITY TO OUTCOMES

STRUCTURED PARTNERSHIPS TRANSFORM IMMUNIZATION ACCESS



THE GAP

- No formal collaborative frameworks between doulas and providers
- Immunization education may not be at the forefront of a doula's conversations
- Coverage expands access, but without structure, impact is lost



THE BRIDGE

- Define clear, complementary roles for doulas and providers
- Establish and make available shared communication tools and resources
- Add training in for doulas to incorporate resources during prenatal sessions



THE OUTCOMES

- Stronger community trust and health literacy
- Extended reach of evidence-based immunization information
- Improved maternal and infant health outcomes

Structured doula-provider collaboration strengthens communication, builds community trust, and improves maternal and infant health outcomes.

RESOURCES

A. Chen Current state of doula Medicaid implementation efforts
National Medicaid Health Law - <https://healthlaw.org/doulamedicaidproject/>

Kozhimannil KB, et al. Role of Doulas in Improving Maternal Health and Health Equity Among Medicaid Enrollees, 2014–2023. *Am J Public Health.* 2024;114(11):1275–1285.
doi:10.2105/AJPH.2024.307805

Kapoor M, et al. Role of doulas across the pregnancy care continuum on maternal and child health: a scoping review. *npj Women's Health.* 2025. doi:10.1038/s44294-025-00109-4

Lemon LS, et al. Quantifying the association between doula care and maternal and neonatal outcomes. *Am J Obstet Gynecol.* 2025;232:387.e1–43. doi:10.1016/j.ajog.2024.08.029

Sobczak, A., et al, (2023) The Effect of Doulas on Maternal and Birth Outcomes: A Scoping Review. Cureus.

28

