

**ILLINOIS PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (IPHA)  
FAMILY PLANNING AND MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH SECTION  
POLICY RESOLUTION 2023**

**Expanding State Medicaid Coverage To Include Doula Services**

**WHEREAS**, the national maternal mortality rate increased from 20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 to 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020 in the United States<sup>1</sup>, causing it to be categorized as the country with the highest maternal mortality ranking out of 11 of the top developed countries<sup>2</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, Illinois maternal mortality rate was 23 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, ranking 36<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in worse maternal mortality rates<sup>3</sup> and reports find more than four out of five (80%) of pregnancy-related deaths in Illinois could have been prevented<sup>4</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, maternal mortality disproportionately impacts communities of color and those of lower socioeconomic status nationwide. In 2020, the maternal mortality rate of non-Hispanic African American women was 55.3 deaths per 100,000 live births, which was 2.9 times the rate for non-Hispanic White women nationwide<sup>1</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, in 2018, Illinois reported a pregnancy-related mortality rate of 23 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, with non-Hispanic African American mothers dying from pregnancy-related causes at more than six times the rate of non-Hispanic White mothers<sup>5</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, a Doula is a trained professional who provides physical and emotional support to birthing people during labor, birth, and in the immediate postpartum period. Doulas can help address various dimensions within the social determinants of health that underlie differences in maternal health outcomes<sup>6</sup>. Despite their support in labor and delivery, only 6% of birthing mothers utilize this option due to lack of awareness, the cost, and lack of state coverage for Medicaid beneficiaries<sup>7,8</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, in Illinois in 2021, legislation was passed to include doula services in Medicaid coverage, along with coverage of home visiting services, \* making Illinois one of eight (8) states and Washington D.C. with Medicaid plans covering doulas<sup>9</sup> as of 2022.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Illinois Public Health Association (IPHA), as a public health leader in Illinois, will support the following measures:

- 1. COVERAGE BY MEDICAID BENEFICIARIES FOR DOULA SERVICES:** IPHA shall monitor efforts by the State of Illinois to implement the expansion of benefits for Medicaid beneficiaries successfully and encourage data collection to include analysis of how coverage of doula services decreases overall costs to the client/patient, and address racial disparities with the goal of improving overall maternal health outcomes, especially among communities of color.

2. **FUNDING TO INCREASE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS AMONG PRACTICIONERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** IPHA shall identify and advocate for state and federal legislative initiatives which allocate funding to create community health education and improve outreach efforts around doulas, and shall encourage state agencies to provide training to public health practitioners, new and future mothers, health care providers, and professional associations of health care providers on the benefits of doula-assisted births through statistics, educational materials, and other resources.
3. **FUNDING FOR RESEARCH ON EFFICACY AND IMPACT:** IPHA shall engage with public health partners in collaborative advocacy efforts to educate policy makers, and state and local leaders on the need for allocation of increased funds to investigate the efficacy of the expansion in coverage, scope and impact of doulas and services on family support at labor and delivery, and overall impact of doulas on maternal mortality across the state and categorized by social determinants of health.

#### References

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\*These additions were supposed to go into effect July 1, 2022, but the coverage has yet to be implemented as the details are still being worked on<sup>9</sup>.