



EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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**ILLINOIS PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
RESOLUTION NO. 3  
2023**

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

**WHEREAS**, the national maternal mortality rate increasing from 20.1 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2019 to 23.8 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, 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 the 50 states in worse maternal mortality rates<sup>3</sup>. 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 lower socioeconomical status nationwide. In 2020, Non-Hispanic African American women maternal mortality rate 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 reports 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. They can help address various dimensions within the social determinants of health that underlie differences in maternal health outcomes<sup>6</sup>. Only 6% of birthing mothers utilize this option due to lack of awareness, expense, and lack of state coverage for Medicaid beneficiaries<sup>7,8</sup> the service offering despite substantial cost savings<sup>7</sup>;

**WHEREAS**, as of 2022, 8 states and Washington D.C Medicaid plans cover doulas<sup>9</sup>; Supposed to be in effect July 1, 2022, allowing for weekly prenatal doula services during delivery and up to

12 months postpartum for Illinois Medicaid beneficiaries, the coverage has yet to be implemented<sup>9</sup>.

**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:** Illinois state legislatures need to expand benefits for Medicaid beneficiaries to include coverage of doula services in order to decrease overall costs, especially for Medicaid beneficiaries, improve racial disparities and overall maternal health outcomes.
2. **FUNDING TO INCREASE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS AMONG PRACTITIONERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** Public Health and Public Health Informatics professionals need to educate consumers (new and future mothers, health care providers, and professional associations of health care providers) on the benefit of doula-assisted births through statistics, educational material, and other educational resources.
3. **FUNDING FOR RESEARCH ON EFFICACY AND IMPACT:** Policy makers, and state and local leaders need to advocate for increased funding or allocation of funds to investigate the efficacy and return on investment for community and individual doulas.

### **References**

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