If a doula were a drug, it would be unethical not to offer it.  

**Health Benefits of Doula Care**  
- **Higher** Apgar Scores
- **Greater** likelihood of a shorter labor
- **More** breastfeeding
  - *with prenatal + postpartum support
- **39% fewer cesareans**
- **35% fewer** negative birth experiences
- **Less** use of pain medication
- **Lower** preterm birth rates
  - *with prenatal support

**Continuous labor support by a doula is "one of the most effective tools to improve labor and delivery outcomes."**

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**What Doulas Do**

Doulas are trained and experienced in providing support before, during, and after birth.  

*Doulas and family members work together as a support team.*

- **Provide Information**
  - Resources
  - Referrals
  - Answers to questions about labor + birth
- **Give Emotional Support**
  - Relaxation techniques
  - Encouragement
  - Calm environment
- **Encourage Communication**
  - Positive dialogue
  - Informed decision-making
  - Self-advocacy
- **Offer Hands-on Support**
  - Walking + position changes
  - Massage
  - Breastfeeding support

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**Unmet Need**

Doulas attended just 6% of births in 2011-12.

- Black, Latina + Medicaid-enrolled women were more likely to want doula support... but not have it

- **Medicaid 35%**
- **Private Insurance 21%**
- **35%** who wanted a doula but didn't have one
- **Black 39%**
- **Latina 30%**
- **White 22%**
In 2013, hospitals billed $126 billion for maternal & newborn care

MORE IS SPENT on childbirth care than any other type of hospital care

A small reduction in cost per birth would have a BIG effect

Maternal + newborn hospital stays account for 49%

of Medicaid hospital stays

34%

of privately insured hospital stays

1 in 3 births is by cesarean

56% more than in 1996 but this hasn’t made moms or babies healthier

Cesarean births cost 50% more than vaginal births

Doulas lower spending by:

DECREASING

• 1st + repeat cesareans

• epidurals

• complications

• chronic conditions

• preterm births

INCREASING

• breastfeeding

DECREASING cesareans by 39% would save more than $2.25 billion for private insurance

$686 million for Medicaid each year

STRATEGIES TO EXPAND DOULA COVERAGE

Federal or State legislation establishing doula coverage

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services guidance and technical assistance to states

Review by U.S. Preventive Services Task Force for inclusion as a recommended service

State Medicaid coverage of doulas as “non-licensed” service practitioners or though a DSRIP or 1115 waiver

Agreements between insurers/managed care organizations with doula agencies/groups

Including doula coverage within innovative payment and delivery systems

In the States

Oregon + Minnesota have implemented Medicaid coverage of doula support

New York has a pilot program currently in just one county

Many States are pursuing legislation to increase access to doulas to reduce disparities in care and outcomes for women of color and low-income women

LEARN MORE IN THE ISSUE BRIEF ON INSURANCE COVERAGE OF DOULA CARE at

Every Mother Counts

www.everymothercounts.org/resources/

National Partnership for Women & Families

www.nationalpartnership.org/doula

Selected References: