



STATE OF WASHINGTON

Statewide Recommendation for Doula Services

In recognition that pregnancy and infant outcomes are a key indicator for population-level health and well-being, and in an evidence-based effort to improve outcomes for birthing people and infants and decrease inequities we have observed, we have determined based upon the scientific evidence and our professional experience that doula services would benefit all pregnant or postpartum people, infants and their families in the State of Washington.

Doulas are trained professionals who provide physical, emotional and informational support to pregnant, birthing, and postpartum people and their families. There is strong evidence that doula care is associated with better perinatal and infant outcomes, including reduced medically unnecessary cesarean sections and other medical interventions, premature deliveries, length of labor, reduced anxiety and stress and increased breastfeeding. Doulas are also associated with higher patient satisfaction and are a promising strategy to address racial and ethnic disparities in perinatal and infant health outcomes.

We hereby recommend that doula services be offered immediately to pregnant, birthing, and postpartum people in Washington until such time as they are determined no longer necessary.*

For more information on how to access doula services, please visit: [Doulas | Washington State Health Care Authority](#) and [Birth Doulas](#).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett in blue ink.

Tao Sheng Kwan-Gett, MD, MPH
State Health & Chief Science Officer
Department of Health



Handwritten signature of Judy Zerzan-Thul in blue ink.

Judy Zerzan-Thul, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer
Health Care Authority



*For purposes of the Medicaid program, the Health Care Authority, through Dr. Zerzan-Thul, has determined that this recommendation fulfills the requirements in 42 C.F.R. § 440.130(c) for a “physician or other licensed practitioner of the healing arts acting within the scope of [their] authorized practice under State law” to provide a written recommendation for preventive services.