

ROOTED DOULA CARE AND SUPPORT PROGRAM



Project Talking Points:

United Healthcare of the Midlands (UHC), I Be Black Girl (IBBG), A Mother's Love, Nebraska Medicine, and the Nebraska Perinatal Quality Improvement Collaborative (NPQIC) have partnered to work on doula support programs in Nebraska and provide some rigor and definition for doula practices to help inform future policy and insurance coverage considerations.

Nebraska mirrors the United States in its racial inequities in rates of infant mortality, maternal mortality, and severe maternal morbidity. Racial inequities are also documented in other birth outcomes that affect the lives of mothers and their babies, including breastfeeding initiation and duration, preterm birth, Cesarean birth, and low birthweight. These differences are inequitable, which means that they are unfair, unacceptable, and often avoidable.

The Rooted Doula Care and Support Program will provide 30 Black pregnant people with a full spectrum doula that the patient will choose through I Be Black Girl and A Mother's Love, at no cost to the patient.

This program will start in June 2023 and is open to:

- Black pregnant people;
- In their first trimester;
- Who live in Douglas or Sarpy Counties (NE);
- Have Nebraska Medicaid coverage;
- And who will give birth at Nebraska Medicine.

What is a full spectrum doula?

A full spectrum doula is a trained, non-medical companion who will provide physical, emotional, and informational support before, during, and after childbirth to help that pregnant person achieve a positive birth journey. A doula complements the healthcare team by amplifying the patient voice.

What a doula does:

- Offers culturally sensitive emotional and informational support to the client and her support person(s).
- Supports the client's choices surrounding the birth, regardless of the doula's personal views.
- Facilitates positive, respectful, and constructive communication between the client, the support person(s), and the medical team.
- Recognizes that the doula operates within an integrated support system, including the client's family and medical care providers, and facilitates informed, collaborative decision-making.
- Encourages the client to consult medical caregivers on any areas of medical concern. A doula does not speak for the client but may prompt the client to ask questions regarding her care/treatment.
- Offers help and guidance on comfort measures such as breathing, relaxation, movement, positioning, comforting touch, visualization, and if available, hydrotherapy and use of a birth ball or peanut ball.
- Supports and assists with initial breastfeeding during the first few hours after birth, and provides postpartum support during the hospital stay.
- Adheres to patient confidentiality in accordance to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

What a doula does not do:

- Diagnose medical conditions or give medical advice.
- Make decisions for the client or project the doula's own values/goals onto the client.
- While in the doula role, perform clinical tasks such as vaginal exams or assessing fetal heart tones.
- Administer medications.
- Interfere with medical treatment in the event of an emergency situation.



A Doula-Friendly Facility

- A doula-friendly facility is one that:
- Recognizes that the doula has been chosen by the client to be a part of the labor support team, and includes the doula as part of the integrated team for the pregnancy, birth, and postpartum period.
- Allows the doula in the clinic exam room for prenatal visits and in the labor and delivery room for the labor and birthing experience, whether or not the allotted number of support people has been reached.
- Ensures that the doula is treated with respect.
- Understands that the doula supports the client and her desires.
- Allows and supports non-medical comfort techniques for labor, including but not limited to varied labor positions, movement, breathing techniques, aromatherapy, comforting touch, visualization, hydrotherapy, and the use of a birth ball and/or peanut ball.
- Facilitates the provision of continuous, calming support by allowing the doula to be present in triage and, absent a compelling reason to the contrary, for procedures such as epidural insertion and cesarean section.
- Ensures that the doula is able to support the client post-partum, while at the hospital, for breastfeeding and additional comfort measures.

What is required of me (the healthcare provider)?

As a healthcare provider caring for a black pregnant/birthing patient in this project with a culturally matched doula, we ask that you welcome the doula into the care team in a respectful and inclusive manner and assist us by completing a brief survey addressing the internal processes and feedback regarding the doula care. We greatly appreciate your assistance and support as we work together to improve health outcomes for our Nebraska Moms and Babies!

I BE 
BLACK GIRL 

