

Title: Doula Support

Responsible Department: OB	Date Created: 11/05/2025
Approver(s): Andrea Burns Chief, Nursing Executive	Date Approved: Not Approved Yet

Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.

Policy Statement:

This hospital recognizes doulas as valued members of the birthing team. Trained doulas are permitted to provide physical, emotional, and informational support during labor, birth, and the immediate postpartum period, in collaboration with the patient's healthcare providers.

Definitions:

- Doula: A trained, non-clinical professional providing emotional, physical, and informational support before, during, and after childbirth.
- Clinical Staff: Licensed providers responsible for medical decision-making and care delivery, including physicians, certified nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, and registered nurses.

Guidelines/Procedures:**1. Patient Rights and Choice**

- Patients have the right to select a doula of their choice as part of their support team.
- Doula presence will not replace or override the role of clinical staff.

2. Access and Identification

- Doulas must check in at hospital security/registration and obtain a doula badge for identification.
- Documentation of doula certification/training may be requested, but certification is not required for patient-chosen doulas.
- Medicaid certified and enrolled doulas must provide written acknowledgement of their certification upon the hospital's request.

3. Role of the Doula

- Provide labor support (comfort measures, positioning, relaxation techniques, partner support, advocacy).
- Facilitate communication between patient and clinical staff without interfering with medical decision-making.
- Not permitted to perform clinical tasks (vital signs, fetal monitoring, vaginal exams, medication administration).

4. Operating Room Access (Cesarean Births)

- One support person plus a doula is permitted when feasible, based on patient stability and operating room capacity.
- If space is limited, priority for the single support person is determined by patient choice.

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5. Collaboration and Communication

- Nurses and providers will communicate directly with the patient.
- Doulas may assist patients in articulating preferences but should not speak for the patient unless specifically asked.
- Conflicts should be escalated to the charge nurse or nurse manager.

6. Education and Orientation

- Staff will receive training on the role of doulas and evidence supporting continuous labor support.
- Doulas will receive orientation on hospital policies (infection control, visitor guidelines, PPE, emergency procedures).

References

- ACOG Committee Opinion No. 766: Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth (2019).
- AWHONN Position Statement: Continuous Labor Support for Every Woman (2018).
- AWHONN Standards for Professional Nursing Practice in the Care of Women and Newborns (2022).