

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS THAT SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED DOULA SUSTAINABILITY

Black Mothers' Breastfeeding Association (BMBFA) hosted the first-ever Michigan Community-based Doula Summit in August 2021. A diverse group of participants joined from across Michigan and the United States. With the goal of increasing the availability and accessibility of community-based doula care for Black and Indigenous women and persons, the summit focused on four tracks: community voice, professional development, workforce development, and policy & advocacy.

With input from summit participants, BMBFA published the Michigan Community-based Doula SWOT Analysis to optimize opportunities for the sustainability, availability and accessibility of community-based doula care across the state of Michigan. From that analysis, policy recommendations for viable community-based doula care are listed below.

- Include the HealthConnect One Community-based Doula Model (and other community doula programs) as a state-funded home visiting program, also known as Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
- Include HealthConnect One and other community doula programs as both qualified and approved MDHHS Medicaid certifying doula programs
- Develop a legislative advisory committee, led by community-based doulas, to inform all policy recommendations and actions
- Develop policies with respect to cultural and traditional practices of birth workers
- Develop success metrics with respect to cultural and traditional practices of birth workers
- Enact legislation to include Medicaid reimbursement for doulas providing prenatal, birth, and/or postpartum care
- Enact legislation requiring private health insurance to cover doulas providing prenatal, birth, and/or postpartum care
- Establish reimbursement that includes flexible visitation arrangements (home, hospital, clinic, doctor, community, telehealth support, etc.)
- Establish reimbursement for gas and mileage
- Establish reimbursement for indirect and/or administrative costs
- Establish equivalent reimbursement for telehealth and in-person visits including virtual presence at births
- Enact policy that ensures clients have access to doulas that are intimately connected to their community
- Safeguard doula services by requiring hospitals to allow the entry of doulas into the birth room in addition to the allotted number of visitors
- Establish policies ensuring that incarcerated pregnant persons have access to doula services
- Establish a diverse collaborative, inclusive of community members, for continued collaboration, visioning and execution of these strategies

