



Medi-Cal Doula Benefits

A doula is a trained professional who provides physical, emotional, and informational support to a pregnant individual before, during, and after childbirth. Doulas also provide support during abortion, miscarriage, and stillbirth. Doulas help birthing people and their families/partners achieve a safe, healthy birthing experience. Doulas are not licensed to deliver babies and do not provide medical care. Doulas have provided pregnancy and birth support under different names for centuries and it is ancestral work for many people and cultures.

Why should I get a Doula?

Doulas give support, information, and education during the prenatal and postpartum period. They also provide continuous support, communication, and encouragement during labor. This individualized attention can empower pregnant individuals and help result in more satisfying and safe experiences during labor, birth, and postpartum.

Those with doulas are less likely to have a baby with low birth weight, less likely to need pain medication during labor, less likely to have a c-section, more likely to start breastfeeding, and have birth complications.

What exactly does a doula do?

- Advocate on your behalf during appointments
- Answer your questions • Help you create a birth plan
- Help facilitate communication with care providers
- Provide emotional and physical support during labor
- Offer pain management techniques including massage and comforting touch
- Provide lactation and feeding assistance after delivery
- Assist the birthing person and family with adjusting to their new roles with parenting a baby

How can I get a doula with my Medi-Cal?

Doula services will be available whether you are in fee-for-service Medi-Cal or with a Medi-Cal plan. Medi-Cal beneficiaries are entitled to at least 11 doula visits, plus doula care during labor and delivery, without prior authorization. Doula services must be recommended by a physician or other licensed Medi-Cal provider. If you have questions or want doula services, call your health plan or the Medi-Cal Helpline at 800-541-5555.

What if I don't have Medi-Cal?

- You can apply for Medi-Cal online, in-person, by telephone, fax or mail: <https://bit.ly/Apply4Medi-Cal>
- You can find your local Medi-Cal office at: <https://bit.ly/LocalMedi-Cal>
- You can call the Medi-Cal Helpline at 800-541-5555

What if I am not eligible for Medi-Cal?

Unfortunately, most private health plans do not pay for doula services, but some may have pilot doula programs. Call your health plan to find out. Ask your doula for a "Super Bill" to submit to your plan. You can use your FSA or HSA funds to pay your doula. Some hospitals have birth doulas through volunteer programs and some doulas may offer lower sliding scale fees.