

Discover the Benefits of Adding a Doula to Your Care Team at Capital Health

WHAT IS A DOULA?

A doula is a person who provides emotional, educational, and physical support throughout pregnancy, labor, birth, and/or postpartum. A doula will meet with you prenatally to understand your vision, address your concerns, and help you complete a birth plan to guide your choices and support your preferences. During labor, a doula provides encouragement and physical support to increase comfort and promote labor progress. A doula also supports postpartum and newborn care. At Capital Health, your doula is considered a part of your care team.



WHY SHOULD I PARTNER WITH A DOULA?

Continuous doula support is associated with improved birth outcomes and experiences, including fewer instances of Cesarean sections, epidurals, shorter labor, less time spent in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), and increased rates of breastfeeding.

WHEN SHOULD I PARTNER WITH A DOULA?

It is never too late to hire a doula, but it is strongly encouraged to begin interviewing doulas in the early part of your second trimester (16 - 24 weeks). If you're interested in hiring a doula, it's important to hire one who you feel comfortable around and who can address the specific concerns you may have.



Source: <https://americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/labor-and-birth/having-a-doula/>

Capital Health's Doula Policy:

- A. The birthing and postpartum patient is supported in their choice to have one doula while in labor and postpartum, in addition to other support person.
- B. The doula is a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a birthing person before, during, and after labor and childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.
 - 1. Doulas will either have a Capital Health issued badge stating the role of “doula” or will have a completed Capital Health Doula Attestation placed in patient’s chart.
 - 2. If a doula is present, the doula is identified to the Registered Nurse (RN) caring for the patient and the Provider (Provider: Licensed Obstetrician or Certified Nurse Midwife) with a bracelet issued by Capital Health.
 - 3. Doulas may be shift-workers. Therefore, the doula may or may not be the same individual who supported the patient at the time of admission. Subsequent doulas must provide the same identification as previously outlined.
- C. The Provider or RN caring for the patient at the time of admission is responsible for educating the doula regarding expected behavior according to Capital Health's policy.
- D. The doula is permitted to perform only those physical, emotional, and informational support services within the doula’s training and scope of practice.
- E. The doula is required to follow the instructions of Capital Health
- F. A doula Liaison is identified on the Capital Health website for patients and doulas to contact.

Capital Health's Doula Procedure:

- A. *The Doula Support of the Birthing and Postpartum Patient (The Role of the)* (Policy MAT:D:6) and Capital Health Doula Attestation are available on the Capital Health website. The doula has access to review and complete these prior to patient admission.
- B. Capital Health’s designated a doula Liaison is Jennifer Hoch, Manager of Lactation and Childbirth Education, who is responsible for communication and coordination with doulas. To contact Jennifer, please email jhoch@capitalhealth.org or call 609-303-4119.
- C. All doulas will provide a signed Capital Health Doula Attestation in Labor Delivery & Recovery (LDR) OR will have a Capital Health issued badge stating “Doula”.
- D. At the time of admission to LDR or Postpartum (PP) Units:
 - 1. The RN caring for the patient provides the patient and doula a copy of Capital Health Policy MAT.D.6 Doula Support of the Birthing and Postpartum Patient.
 - 2. Upon presentation of Capital Health Doula Attestation or Capital Health “Doula” badge, the doula will receive a doula bracelet.
- E. The charge nurse of the unit may restrict the presence of a doula under the following circumstances:
 - 1. In an effort to comply with any executive order issued by the Governor of the State of New Jersey or the President of the United States;
 - 2. At the request of the patient;
 - 3. Where, in the discretion of the patient’s care team or the charge nurse of the Maternity or Post-partum unit (as the case may be), the presence of the doula is interfering with patient, staff, or visitor safety;
 - 4. Where there exists a temporary facility restriction on all visitors or non-essential personnel for the purpose of infection control or facility security.