CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES
Michelle Baass | Director

RECOMMENDATION FOR DOULA SERVICES FOR PREGNANT AND POST-PARTUM MEDI-CAL MEMBERS

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is issuing a statewide standing recommendation that all Medi-Cal members who are pregnant or were pregnant within the past year would benefit from receiving doula services from a Medi-Cal enrolled doula provider. This recommendation fulfills the federal requirements in section 440.130(c) of title 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations for a physician or other licensed practitioner of the health arts acting within their scope of practice to provide a written recommendation for preventive services.

Doulas provide person-centered, culturally competent care that supports the racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of beneficiaries while adhering to evidence-based best practices. Doula services are aimed at preventing perinatal complications and improving health outcomes for birthing individuals and infants.

To help achieve DHCS Comprehensive Quality Strategy Goals to keep families and communities healthy via prevention, close maternity care disparities, and improve birth outcomes and children's preventive care, and given current infant and maternal mortality rates in California, DHCS has determined that all Medi-Cal members who are pregnant or were pregnant within the past year would benefit from doula services. Doula services may only be provided during pregnancy; during labor and delivery, miscarriage, and abortion; and within one year of the end of a beneficiary's pregnancy. Doulas who use this standing recommendation for their members should note the standing recommendation in their records.

This standing recommendation authorizes the following services:

- One initial visit.
- Up to eight additional visits that may be provided in any combination of prenatal and postpartum visits.
- Support during labor and delivery (including labor and delivery resulting in a stillbirth), abortion or miscarriage.
- Up to two extended three-hour postpartum visits after the end of a pregnancy.

This standing recommendation does not authorize additional postpartum visits beyond the eight visits that may be provided during either the prenatal or postpartum period. Members may receive up to nine additional postpartum visits with an additional recommendation from a physician or other licensed practitioner of the healing arts acting within their scope of practice.