



October 23, 2023

RE: Doula services added to the list of preventative services under the Medi-Cal program

Dear Participating Physician (PPG),

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) has included doula services to the list of preventative services covered under the Medi-Cal program. A Medi-Cal member qualifies for doula services if they are pregnant or were pregnant within the past year. A doula is an experienced and/or trained non-clinical birth worker who provides health education, advocacy, and physical, emotional and non-medical support for pregnant and postpartum persons before, during and after childbirth including support during miscarriage, stillbirth and abortion. Doula services may also include lactation support, development of a birth plan and linkages to community-based resources.

Doula services aim to prevent perinatal complications and improve health outcomes for birthing parents and infants. Specifically, Black and African American pregnant women are at heightened risk for poor maternal and infant health outcomes. To help improve the maternal mortality disparity rates amongst this population, L.A. Care Health Plan (L.A. Care) highly recommends that Black and African American pregnant women receive culturally congruent doula services. In addition, studies have shown that individuals who receive doula support during their pregnancy have a decreased risk of cesarean section, shortened labor time, less use of epidurals, and improved emotional well-being.

As we are actively working to increase our network capacity of doulas, we are currently contracted with an organization called The Doula Network. Please note that all doula services should be billed by L.A. Care's directly contracted individual doulas and doula organizations in order to receive payment for services rendered.

Doula services do not require an authorization. If a Medi-Cal member requests for doula services, either a standing order or a Doula Recommendation Form will be needed in order to initiate the request. For the standing order process, please dial (844) 858-9938 and a L.A. Care Representative will help verify eligibility. If the member is determined eligible, the L.A. Care Representative will work internally to process and forward the request to the doula organization where the member will be contacted for services.

If you prefer to complete a Doula Recommendation Form, it is available on L.A. Care's website under "Health Education Forms" at:

<https://www.lacare.org/providers/provider-resources/forms-manuals>. Under the "Doula Information" section of the form, the following information can be incorporated:

PL1644-0723

- Name of Organization: The Doula Network
- Address: 1317 Edgewater Dr., STE 2019, Orlando, FL 32804-6350
- Phone Number: (877) 436-8527
- Email Address: referrals@thedoulanetwork.com

Please complete and submit the form to Referral@thedoulanetwork.com and DoulaBenefit@lacare.org. Please be advised that this is an **interim process** until a fully contracted network is developed. Once L.A. Care has a fully contracted network in place, the form can be sent directly to the doula organization/independent doula with a copy to DoulaBenefit@lacare.org. L.A. Care will inform the network of the updated process in a future communication.

L.A. Care is requesting PPGs to downstream this communication to your network of providers and facilities to increase awareness of the availability of doula services and to help ensure there are not any barriers in place that would prevent a doula from servicing a Medi-Cal member during their prenatal visits, labor and delivery, and/or postpartum follow-up visits.

To learn more about the doula benefit, visit L.A. Care's website at: <https://www.lacare.org/providers/news/thepulse/doula-support-expectant-mothers>.

If you have any questions or require further clarification regarding the doula services, please email DoulaBenefit@lacare.org.

Thank you,

Health Education Department
L.A. Care Health Plan