



**Bill:** Senate Bill 163

**Title:** Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Pilot Program

**Committee:** House Health and Government Operations Committee

**Date:** March 30, 2021

**Position:** Support with Amendments

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The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *Senate Bill 163 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Pilot Program*. The bill requires the Maryland Medical Assistance Program to set up a three-county pilot program to reimburse certified doulas for prenatal visits and support during labor and delivery.

ACNM strongly supports the presence of doulas as their role is complementary to that of midwives, nurses, and other health professionals. Doulas provide both physical and emotional support to the families they serve. Doulas also empower women to communicate their needs and perceptions and actualize their dreams of a healthy, positive birth experience. The positive effects of doula care have been found to be greater for women who were socially disadvantaged and low-income.<sup>1</sup>

ACNM suggests two amendments to support the implementation of the program:

- Recognize several more type of certifications for doulas to be more inclusive of community-based doulas:

*On page 4 in line 6, insert “DOULA TRAINING INTERNATIONAL, MAMA SHAFIYA MONROE, AND MAMATOTO VILLAGE” after “ASSOCIATION”*

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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647727/#:~:text=Doulas%20are%20trained%20to%20provide,and%20have%20less%20stressful%20births.>

- Require the Department of Health to consult with the Doula Technical Assistance Advisory Group on the development of the pilot program, including reimbursement rates:

*On page 5 after line 15 insert:*

*“SECTION 3, AND IT BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department of Health shall consult with the Doula Technical Advisory Group on reimbursement rates and the implementation of the Doula Pilot Program.”*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. We ask for a favorable report with amendments. If any additional information is helpful, please contact Robyn Elliott at [relliott@policypartners.net](mailto:relliott@policypartners.net) or (443) 926-3443.