



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee
Bill Number: House Bill 1202
Title: Hospitals and Birth Centers – COVID -19 Visitation Policies - Doulas
Hearing Date: March 9, 2021
Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *House Bill 1202 – Hospital and Birth Centers – COVID-19 Visitation Policies – Doulas*. This bill would authorize doulas to be present with a woman during labor, delivery, and postpartum recovery. This bill would also prohibit a doula from being considered a support person or visitor.

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.¹ For these reasons, ACNM strongly supports the presence of doulas in hospitals and birth centers.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony, and we urge a favorable vote. If we can provide any further information, please contact Suhani Chitalia at schitalia@policypartners.net or (240) 506-9325.

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