



Committee: House Health and Government Operations Committee

Bill: House Bill 669 - Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services – Coverage

Hearing Date: February 16, 2022

Position: Support with Amendment

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) strongly supports with amendment *House Bill 669 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Doula Services – Coverage*. The bill would make doula reimbursement into a permanent program under Medicaid. Medicaid is about to launch a pilot reimbursement program and has been working collaboratively with the doula, consumer, and provider community. The bill largely reflects regulations that have been proposed for the pilot program.

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.

We do ask for the following amendment to clarify the non-clinical role doulas that play as part of the patient care team:

On page 1, line 21 following “MEANS” insert “**NON-CLINICAL**”

On page 2, line 10 strike "COUNSELING" and substitute “**COACHING**”

On page 4, line 7 after “MEDICALLY NECESSARY” insert “**AS DETERMINED BY A LICENSED OR CERTIFIED HEALTH CARE PRACTITIONER IN LINE WITH REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT**”

We ask for a favorable report along with our amendments. If we can provide any further information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

¹<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647727/#:~:text=Doulas%20are%20trained%20to%20provide,and%20have%20less%20stressful%20births.>