

# Private Insurance Coverage Doula Care SB 118 Sen. Locke; HB 935 Del. LeVere Bolling

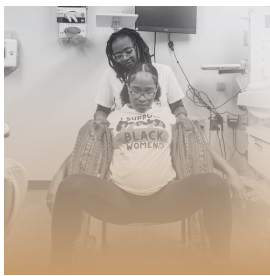
## FACT SHEET



**Everybody deserves a Doula! This bill will require private insurance plans in Virginia to cover doulas as a mandated provider.**

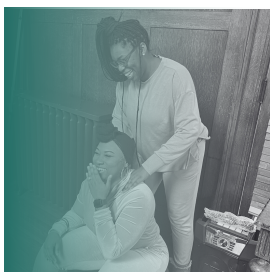
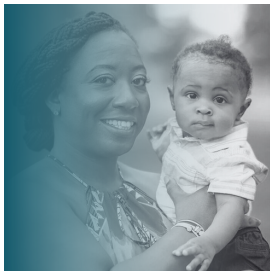
### What is a Doula?

- Doulas are trained non-medical perinatal care professionals who work directly for pregnant, birthing, and postpartum people and their families.
- Doulas provide informational, physical, emotional, and advocacy support for pregnant people and their families.



### Why should private health insurance cover doula care?

- **Evidence strongly suggests that the presence of a doula significantly improves birth and postpartum outcomes, mitigating the racial disparities in morbidity and mortality.**
- Regardless of income and education levels, Black women in the United States are three times more likely to die from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth than white women.
- Communities of color consistently report **mistreatment and dismissive behaviors from perinatal healthcare providers.**
- Community-based doulas help ensure that pregnant people who face the most significant risk of discrimination and mistreatment in the medical system receive the additional support they require.
- Research demonstrates that a strong doula/client relationship grounded in trust and shared experience increases a pregnant person's engagement in care and agency in decision-making and improves overall health outcomes.
- As of 2021, Virginia already covers doula care under Medicaid. **Private Insurance, however, generally does not cover doula care in Virginia.**
- One study found that doulas have a beneficial impact on cesarean and preterm birth rates. **Plus, doula care saved \$58.4 million and prevented 3,288 preterm births annually.**
- In another study, Oregon researchers determined that doula care led to **219,530 fewer cesarean births, 51 fewer maternal deaths, 382 fewer uterine ruptures, and 100 fewer hysterectomies and saved \$91 million.**
- Further research indicates doula care increases the initiation and duration of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding reduces a parent's risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, the baby's risk of asthma, type 1 diabetes, and sudden infant death syndrome. The CDC estimates that low rates of breastfeeding add over \$3 billion to U.S. healthcare costs annually.



### The 2-Sentence Talking Points:

Doula care can prevent preterm birth, unnecessary cesarean sections, maternal deaths, uterine ruptures, and unnecessary birth trauma. Requiring private insurance to cover doulas will help reduce racial maternal health outcome disparities, save lives, and reduce medical costs — it is a win for women, insurance companies, and Virginia.