



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
Margaret M. O'Neill Bldg., Third Floor, Suite 1
410 Federal Street
Dover, Delaware 19901
302-739-3621


The Honorable John Carney,
Governor

John McNeal, Director
SCPD

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 29, 2024

TO: Delaware Department of Education
Office of the Secretary/Attn: Regulation Review

FROM: Benjamin Shrader, Chairperson 
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: House Bill 345, 27 DE Register of Regulations 740 (April 1, 2024)}

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has House Bill 345 pertaining to additional doula coverage, and have the following comments:

HB 345 provides additional doula coverage for additional postpartum doula visits (beyond the three postpartum visits of up to 90 minutes) when recommended by a practitioner or clinician acting in their school of practice. Expansive doula services is supported by many data points. Last year's HB 80 notes that while Black women made up 28% of Delaware live births in 2019, they represent 78% of pregnancy-related fatalities over the 2017-2021 period, aligning with the national trend; Black women are three times more likely to experience pregnancy-related mortality than white women in the United States. HB 80 additionally notes that the Maternal Mortality Review found that the most common accompanying issues to infant death were those related to the provision of support in making medical decisions, the ability to access care, and effective communication with healthcare professionals. HB 80 further notes that doulas provide positive and nurturing environments throughout the pregnancy and birthing process and provide care "that is more informed of their patient's experiences, values, or identities[.]"

Pertinently, doula care has been found to more positively affect women who are socially disadvantaged, low income, unmarried, giving birth for the first time, are without a companion, or who experience language or cultural barriers.¹ Finally, doula-assisted mothers were "four times less

¹ Kenneth J. Gruber, Susan H. Cupito, & Christina F. Dobson, Impact of Doulas on Healthy Birth Outcomes, The Journal of Perinatal Education (2013), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647727/#>.

likely to have a low birth weight [] baby [and] two times less likely to experience a birth complication involving themselves or their baby.”

Given the state-wide and national statistics regarding pregnancy-related fatalities, the inclusion of doulas in insurance-coverage is a life-saving effort which will also prevent disability. Further, women with disabilities also benefit from having doulas as they adjust to newborns and learn parenting skills. For all of these reasons, the SCPD endorses HB 345.

The SCPD thanks you for considering our comments. Please contact SCPD if you have any questions or comments regarding our observations.

cc: Marissa Band, Esq., DLP
Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council