



**Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)**  
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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 24, 2023

**TO:** The Honorable Members of the Delaware General Assembly

**FROM:** Ann C. Fisher, Chairperson  
GACEC

**RE:** **House Bill No. 80 Medicaid Coverage of Doula Services**

The Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC) has reviewed House Bill No. 66, which requires that doula services be covered by Medicaid in Delaware by January 1, 2024. This legislation follows up on House Bill No. 343 from the 151<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, which required the Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance (DMMA) to submit a plan for implementing this coverage and draws on that completed report. Council **supports** the proposed legislation for several reasons. The amendment 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. The data 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. The Bill 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[.]"

Using this data, the amendment adds that beginning on January 1, 2024, all entities that provide health insurance under §505(3) of Title 31 must provide coverage of doula services that include (1) three prenatal visits of up to 90 minutes; (2) three postpartum visits of up to 90 minutes; (3) attendance through labor and birth. Furthermore, the amendment adds that DMMA "shall establish, in collaboration with stakeholders, a process for doulas to be certified and to enroll as participating providers, as well as a reimbursement rate for doula services that supports a livable

annual income for full-time practicing doulas.” Council recommends DMMA assemble stakeholder groups to review the certification process as well as the pay scale for doula services

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 promote improved maternal and child health. Council agrees with the need for this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our support of House Bill No. 80. Please feel free to contact me or Pam Weir at the GACEC office should you have any questions.