



## **Molina HealthCare and National Doula Network Partner to Improve Access to Birth Doula Services**

**MIAMI, FL. -- January 25, 2021** Molina HealthCare is partnering with the National Doula Network (NDN) to make birth doula services accessible for families with Medicaid in South Florida. This is a first-of-its-kind service to revolutionize maternal health care. NDN will immediately begin serving doulas and families from Sarasota to Miami.

The National Doula Network is a Medicaid provider designed to provide billing and claims assistance for birth doulas to receive financial reimbursement for their services.

“NDN is excited to partner with Molina Healthcare to deliver this vital benefit to health plan members and doulas across the state. Molina Health Plan members have unrestricted access to birth doula services in their communities and doulas receive average market rate reimbursement for their services,” says Elizabeth Simmons, co-founder and CEO of NDN.

Doulas provide non-medical, evidence-based interventions to support members with Medicaid before, during and after childbirth. The interventions include hands-on comfort measures, emotional support, informational resources, childbirth education, birth planning, facilitating communication with primary, OB/GYN and midwifery care providers and helping people make informed decisions about their care. Doulas personalize care to the member’s individual preferences and personal values.

In 2018, Florida had the third highest rate of cesarean births in the United States, with nearly 37% of all live births being cesarean deliveries.<sup>1</sup> Among the pregnancy related deaths that occurred during labor/delivery or the postpartum period, 53.3% were following a cesarean birth and more than 23% of cesarean births were unplanned. On average, nearly 700 pregnancy related deaths occur each year in the U.S. and of those maternal deaths, at least 60% are preventable with better healthcare, communication and support, during pregnancy, labor, delivery and up to one year postpartum.<sup>2</sup>

Having a birth doula can reduce risks for maternal and infant mortality and decrease cesarean birth rates by as much as 28%, the length of labor by up to 25%, the use of oxytocin by 40% and requests for

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<sup>1</sup> Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Osterman MJK, Driscoll A. Births: Final Data for 2018. National Vital Statistics Reports 68(13), November 27, 2019. Retrieved from: [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/cesarean\\_births/cesareans.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/cesarean_births/cesareans.htm).

<sup>2</sup> Petersen EE, Davis NL, Goodman D, et al. *Vital Signs: Pregnancy-Related Deaths, United States, 2011–2015, and Strategies for Prevention*, 13 States, 2013–2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2019;68:423–429. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6818e1>

epidurals by 60%.<sup>3</sup> In a 2016 study, Medicaid beneficiaries with doula care had 22% lower odds of preterm birth.<sup>4</sup>

Increased access to doula supported births can help reduce medical costs for health plans and the state agency. With nearly 107,000 births covered by Medicaid in Florida in 2018, NDN's services are poised to significantly improve access to doula services, improve health outcomes and reduce unnecessary medical costs by reducing risks for more costly interventions.

“This is a valuable partnership for Molina as NDN is able to directly impact our members' access to birth doula services in their community that are free and accessible at home, online or in a clinic setting. Birth doula support can improve members' birth experience, supports AHCA's goals for improving birth outcomes, improved access to care and healthier babies,” says Stephen Morgan, Director of Provider Contracts at Molina Healthcare of Florida.

For more information or to learn more about accessing these services, visit:  
[www.nationaldoulanetwork.com](http://www.nationaldoulanetwork.com) or email [hello@nationaldoula.com](mailto:hello@nationaldoula.com).

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The National Doula Network (NDN) is a licensed Medicaid provider designed to help Doulas access financial reimbursement for their services. NDN works directly with Medicaid managed care organizations, Doulas, families and doula certifying agencies. NDN was founded in 2019 by Elizabeth Simmons, MS, CD and Kara Van de Grift, MSW, MSPH, CPD to increase access to insurance-covered doula services for all birthing parents.

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<sup>3</sup> Hodnett ED, Gates S Hofmeyr GJ, Sakala C. Continuous Support for Women During Childbirth. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. CD003766, (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Kozhimannil KB, Hardeman RR, Alarid-Escudero F, Vogelsang CA, Blauer-Peterson C, Howell EA. Modeling the Cost-Effectiveness of Doula Care Associated with Reductions in Preterm Birth and Cesarean Delivery. *Birth*. 2016 Mar;43(1):20-7. doi: 10.1111/birt.12218. Epub 2016 Jan 14.