

Questions and answers about doula services

FOR RECOMMENDING PROVIDERS

1. Why should I recommend doula services to my pregnant or postpartum patient?

As noted in [All Plan Letter 23-024](#): “Doula services are aimed at preventing perinatal complications and improving health outcomes for both birthing parents and infants.”

“Doulas are birth workers who provide health education, advocacy, and physical, emotional, and non-medical support for pregnant and postpartum persons before, during, and after childbirth, including support during miscarriage, stillbirth, and abortion.”

“Doulas also offer various types of support, including health navigation; lactation support; development of a birth plan; and linkages to community-based resources.”

2. How do I recommend a patient for doula services?

Provider recommendations need to be submitted in writing. Please complete the [Maternity Program referral form](#) and fax it to (844) 893-1211. You may also fax us the [DHCS Medi-Cal Doula Services Recommendation form](#).

3. Am I required to recommend and work with doulas?

Effective January 1, 2023, managed care plans are required by the state of California to provide doula services to their Medi-Cal members. As a contracted provider with Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plan, we ask you to cooperate with us in meeting this requirement.

4. What if a doula and I have different opinions about the patient’s care?

As a physician, you are responsible for providing your expert medical opinion to your patient. It is then up to the patient to decide how they want to proceed with their care and birthing experience.

5. How might a doula help a patient who is postpartum?

A doula can help a postpartum patient with lactation, provide emotional support, offer practical advice, and connect families with community-based and behavioral health support services.

6. How might a doula help a patient who is experiencing a miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion?

The additional support of a doula may be especially needed when a pregnancy ends in miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. A doula can provide a listening ear, advice for self-care, and recommendations for community-based and behavioral health services.

7. What if my patient asks me to recommend a doula? Are doulas listed on the Find a Doctor tool? Can you provide a list of in-network doulas?

At this time, Blue Shield's Find a Doctor tool does not display doulas. Please call our Maternity Care Management Team at (888) 802-4410, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and they will provide you with this information.

You can also submit the [Maternity Program referral form](#) via fax to (844) 893-1211 and our team can match your patient with an in-network doula. You may also fax us the [DHCS Medi-Cal Doula Services Recommendation form](#).

8. How do I know if a doula is registered with Medi-Cal and in the Blue Shield Promise network?

Please call our Maternity Care Management Team at (888) 802-4410, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and they will advise you.

9. What if my patient wants to receive services from a doula who is not in our network? Can I recommend a doula who is not in the Blue Shield Promise network?

Blue Shield Promise may facilitate out-of-network doula services if in-network doula services are unavailable.

Please encourage out-of-network doulas to register with Medi-Cal and Blue Shield Promise.

For information about Medi-Cal enrollment requirements for doulas, visit www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/pages/doula.aspx.

After enrolling through the [Provider Application for Validation and Enrollment](#) (PAVE) online enrollment portal, doulas interested in becoming Blue Shield Promise providers should contact our Doula Program office at BSCPromiseDoula@blueshieldca.com

10. Are delegated providers financially responsible for doula services?

No, Blue Shield Promise takes financial responsibility for doula services provided to our members.

11. Whom do I contact at Blue Shield Promise with questions? Where can I learn more?

Please call our Maternity Care Management Team at (888) 802-4410, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and we will be happy to advise you.

Additional resources:

- Blue Shield Promise [Maternity Program web page](#)
- [DHCS Medi-Cal Doula Services Recommendation](#)
- [DHCS Doula Services web page](#)
- [DHCS Doula Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) Sheet](#)