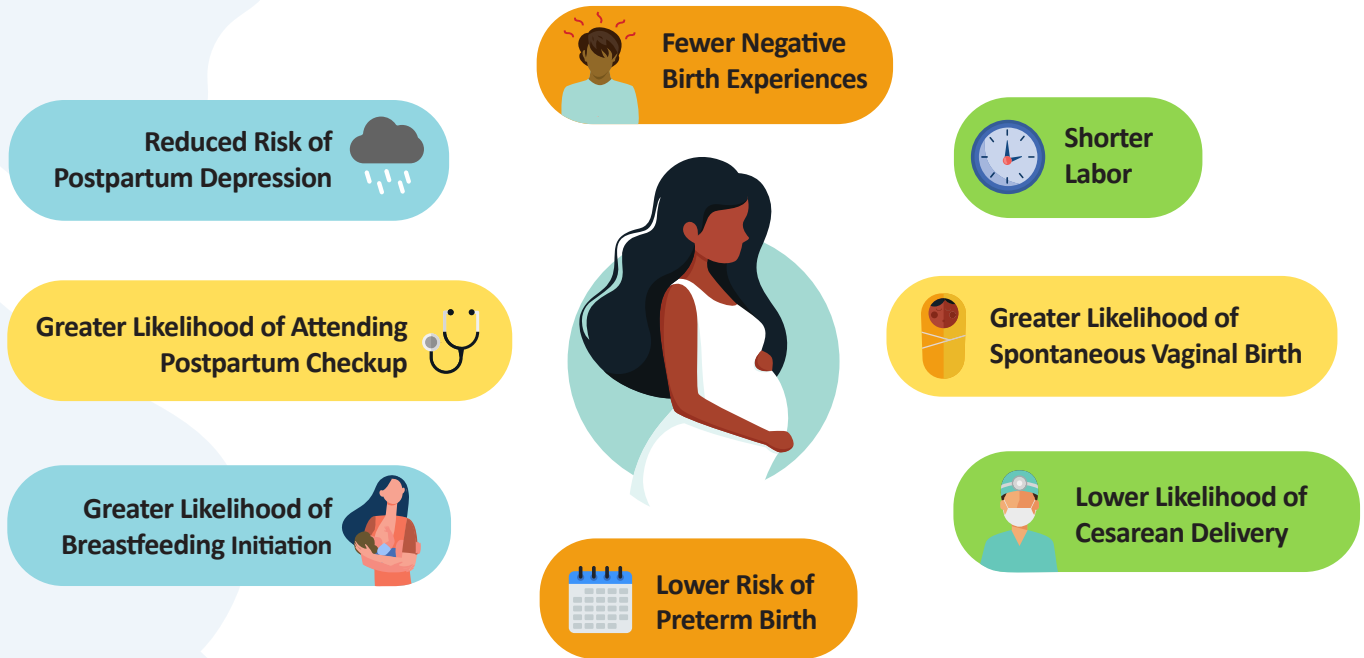


DOULA AND CLINICIAN COLLABORATION IN HOSPITALS

Doulas provide continuous, nonclinical support that enhances communication and comfort, while licensed clinicians maintain full responsibility for medical decision-making and interventions when clinically indicated.

DOULA SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Studies show doula-supported births may reduce maternal and infant complications, lower maternal stress, and increase patient satisfaction with the birthing experience.*



TYPES OF DOULAS AND THEIR SCOPE OF PRACTICE

Doulas are trained, nonclinical caregivers who build relationships and trust, share knowledge, and provide continuous one-on-one support to patients.

FULL-SPECTRUM AND ANTEPARTUM (HIGH-RISK PREGNANCY) DOULA

BIRTH DOULA

POSTPARTUM DOULA

PREGNANCY

- Develop a birth plan, outlining the patient's preferences, principles, and priorities for care throughout pregnancy, while in labor, during delivery, and after birth
- Share resources and nonclinical information about the perinatal experience
- Help the patient identify and advocate for their needs throughout the perinatal period

LABOR AND DELIVERY

- Review and discuss the birth plan alongside the patient and clinical team
- Provide guidance, comfort measures, and emotional and physical support
- Assist with pain management throughout labor progression
- Encourage patients to self-advocate and articulate their needs, questions, or concerns

POSTPARTUM

- Help facilitate skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding initiation
- Support maternal recovery and promote postpartum medical care
- Provide nonclinical newborn care education, including bathing, soothing, and diapering
- Assist with household chores and overnight infant care

HOW DOULAS AND CLINICIANS COORDINATE CARE DURING LABOR AND DELIVERY

All members of a patient’s maternity care team are united by mutual respect and a shared commitment to fostering a safe and joyful birthing experience. Doulas and clinicians play complementary roles during the labor and delivery event. Each contributes a unique set of skills that, together, may lead to stronger maternal and newborn outcomes and improve patient satisfaction. Below are some examples of that collaboration in action.



CLINICIANS

DOULAS

| | |
|--|--|
| Review the birth plan with the patient, family, and doula | Explain the doula role in the room, in accordance with the patient’s birth plan |
| Provide the doula with access to supplies, such as towels, gowns, and gloves, and beverage stations | Provide the patient with comfort measures and tools, such as massage, aromatherapy, beverages, and showers |
| Perform clinical tasks and exams, such as monitoring fetal and patient vital signs, and checking cervical dilation | Support eating, drinking, ambulation, and repositioning during labor |
| Administer pain medication and/or epidural in consultation with the patient | Assist with pain management, such as support with breathing techniques and counter-pressure application |
| Inform the patient of their medical options throughout labor progression | Encourage the patient to voice questions and concerns to clinicians, facilitating positive, open communication |
| Guide the patient through birth and placenta delivery | Help initiate immediate skin-to-skin contact and the first breastfeeding latch |



***Sources include:**

Chaudhary, P., Rech, J.P., Kumar, G. et al. Role of doulas across the pregnancy care continuum on maternal and child health: a scoping review. *npj Womens Health* 3, 63 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44294-025-00109-4>

Falconi AM, Ramirez L, Cobb R, Levin C, Nguyen M, Inglis T. Role of Doulas in Improving Maternal Health and Health Equity Among Medicaid Enrollees, 2014–2023. *Am J Public Health*. 2024 Nov;114(11):1275-1285. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2024.307805. PMID: 39356988; PMCID: PMC11447808.

Sobczak A, Taylor L, Solomon S, Ho J, Kemper S, Phillips B, Jacobson K, Castellano C, Ring A, Castellano B, Jacobs RJ. The Effect of Doulas on Maternal and Birth Outcomes: A Scoping Review. *Cureus*. 2023 May 24;15(5):e39451. doi: 10.7759/cureus.39451. Erratum in: *Cureus*. 2025 Sep 23;17(9):c310. doi: 10.7759/cureus.c310. PMID: 37378162; PMCID: PMC10292163.