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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Notice of intent – Huge health equity win for doulas and birthing families!

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) plans to submit a State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, according to a public notice made June 8th, 2022. The SPA would increase the fee-for-service reimbursement for doula services from $350 to $1,500 per pregnancy. Doulas are non-medical birth companions who offer birthing people in the childbearing year physical, informational and emotional support. Doulas specialize in one-to-one personalized care and provide an average of thirty to fifty hours of care per client, not including months of 24-7 on call support. They are either self employed or independent contractors of an organization. This fee covers payment for two prenatal care visits, care throughout delivery and two required postpartum home visits with a doula.

OHA recognizes the importance of birth doulas as Traditional Health Workers who provide culturally responsive care that can lead to improved maternal health outcomes. This rate increase helps advance OHA’s goal to eliminate health inequities by 2030. The Oregon Doula Association (ODA) has been actively advocating for a livable wage for doulas serving families with Medicaid.

“We recognize that Oregon will not reach the goal of eliminating health inequities for birthing families if community-based doulas are not reimbursed at a livable, sustainable rate. Oregon was the first State in the US to create a Medicaid doula pathway but the low rate meant that few doulas participated and low income families remained underserved. With this rate increase, we anticipate that many more families will shortly be able to access doula advocacy and support and Oregon has the opportunity to lead the nation in health equity for birthing families” stated Iris Bicksler, Policy Chair for the Oregon Doula Association (ODA).

Bicksler continues, “The Oregon Doula Association is excited to continue working alongside the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) to support a diverse workforce that represent the communities they serve and a sustainable living wage for Oregon doulas statewide.”

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The Oregon Doula Association (ODA) mission is to create a unifying, inclusive, statewide professional organization for all doulas. The ODA was formed to improve maternal and infant holistic health outcomes, ensure healthcare equity, and cultivate culturally appropriate and humanistic maternity care for Oregon families.

“Birthing people with the Oregon Health Plan have doula services covered under their plan since 2013. This adjusted rate increase however supports the development of a sustainable doula workforce. This is a big step towards bringing universal doula care to all birthing families,” stated Martha Rivera Canjura, ODA President.

Link to notice:  

For more information or to become involved as a doula, contact the Oregon Doula Association www.oregondoulas.org and oregondoulas@gmail.com

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