Expanding the Maternity Care Team: The Role of Doulas

Lisa Kane Low PhD CNM
OBI Co-Director
Associate Professor
School of Nursing, Dept. OB/GYN & Women’s Studies
University of Michigan
Maternity Care TEAM:
Roles in Promoting Physiologic Birth

TEAM:
Common Goal, Collective Approach, Experience working with each other

Adding TEAM members:
Role of Doula, Family and Friends
The goal of every person in the birth room should be to help keep you comfortable, relaxed, and confident.
The Evidence

In a Cochrane review (22 RTC, n>15,000) researchers demonstrated that continuous labor support promoted

- More spontaneous vaginal birth, shorter labor, and greater maternal satisfaction
- Less use of pain medications

Hodnett, Gates, Hofmeyr, & Sakala, 2012
Continuous Labor Support

- Can be provided by family member, hospital staff, or Doula
- Cochrane Review, 2017: 26 trials 15,858 women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>DIRECTION OF CHANGE</th>
<th>RR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF TRIALS IN ANALYSIS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF WOMEN IN ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cesarean Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75 (95% CI 0.64 to 0.88)</td>
<td>24 trials</td>
<td>15,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low five minute Apgar</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.62 (95% CI 0.46 to 0.85)</td>
<td>14 trials</td>
<td>12,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.08 (95% CI 1.04 to 1.12)</td>
<td>21 trials</td>
<td>14,369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Outcomes:

- 28% less likely to have a cesarean birth
- 31% less likely to use synthetic oxytocin to augment labor
- 9% less likely to use pain medication
- 34% less likely to rate their childbirth experience negatively

If 14 women have a Doula, 1 cesarean birth will be prevented

www.dona.org
Continuous labor support should be the standard of care for all women in labor.
Practical Application

- Supportive care in labor includes emotional support, comfort measures, information, advocacy.
- Support persons include midwives, doulas, nurses, partners, families, friends.

Doula of North America (DONA) International, 2008; Hodnett et al., 2012
“If Doulas were a drug they would be required for all pregnant women”

Penny Simkin

“Epi-DOULA”
Conceptual model for continuous labor support

- Continuous labor support
  - Increased mobility
  - Increased self-esteem
  - Decreased pain
  - Decreased anxiety

- Decreased use of epidurals
  - Shorter labor
  - No need for extra interventions (Pitocin)
  - Higher satisfaction
  - Spontaneous vaginal birth
  - Better infant outcomes
  - Decreased C-section rates
What is a doula?

A doula is trained & Experienced in pregnancy, labor, Birth, Breastfeeding and the postpartum period.

www.DONA.org

www.CAPPA.net
A Doula Provides

Education about childbirth and newborns for the mother-to-be

Continuous support to a mother before, during, and after birth.

Help to mother-to-be to identify her birth preferences and advocate for herself with her care providers
What does a doula do?

A Doula

“mothers the mother”

Provides continuous support

and reassurance to the birthing person and supports partners

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOmEWBUyrHI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6050qpw1T8
What does a doula do?

A doula is present
Education and Certification as a Doula

• Doulas of North America (DONA) now DONA International
  Oldest and largest organization
• International Childbirth Educators Association (ICEA)
• Childbirth and Post Partum Professional Association
• Association of Labor Assistants and Childbirth Educators (ALACE)
• Independent Training Program Options
Doula Qualifications

• Training
  o DONA International
  o CAPPA
  o ICEA

• Certification
  o Training process
  o Education
  o Experience supporting families

• Scope of Services
  o Prenatal Care Support
  o Care during Labor and Birth
  o Post Partum Care and Support
  o Breastfeeding Support
Doulas make a difference...

- Fewer c-sections; fewer repeat c-sections
- Fewer interventions
- Increased breastfeeding rates
- Shorter hospital stays
- More satisfaction with birth experience
- Lower costs $$ to family, insurers, hospitals
Medicaid Cost Savings

- Minnesota
- State Medicaid Program

Due to reducing CS rates they determined cost benefit of providing Medicaid Coverage for Doula Services.

- CS differential was 22.5% with Doulas and 31% without

Kozhimannil et al AJPH April 2013, Vol 103 No 4
“One of the most effective tools to improve labor and delivery outcomes is the continuous presence of support personnel, such as a doula” [for low risk, term, singleton, vertex births]
Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth

“The desire to avoid unnecessary interventions during labor and birth is shared by health care providers and pregnant women. Obstetrician-gynecologists, in collaboration with midwives, nurses, patients, and those who support them in labor, can help women meet their goals for labor and birth by using techniques that are associated with minimal interventions and high rates of patient satisfaction.”

What Collaboration does and does not look like

Supportive of Collaboration

- Feeling respected
  - May not agree but respect is shown
  - Working as a team
- Treatment of the woman
  - Given choices
  - Valuing her preferences
- Specific Behaviors
  - Welcomed
  - Introduced to the space
  - Speaking to Doula as team member
  - Common courtesies/comforts
- Sharing Ideas on options

Barriers to Collaboration

- Preconceived notions
  - “Always a challenge
- Lack of evidence based approaches to care
  - Eating in labor
  - Fetal monitoring
- Use of done deal statements
  - This is what we are going to do
- Separating Doulas from clients due to protocol
Picking the Model to Meet the Unique Needs Of Women and Their Families in Their Communities
How to find a Doula

• Fee for service or hire model
• Provider Referral
• Online options
• Community-based programs
• Childbirth Educators
Find your perfect doula now

136 Birth doulas in Michigan.
Displaying page 1 of 10

Ginger Holleman, LMSW
Ginger Holleman LLC
Birth Fee: $950

Melissa Paige
Naturally Yours Doula Practice
Birth Fee: $775 to $1150

Kim Langley CD(DONA)
Naturally Yours Doula Practice
Birth Fee: $775 to $1150

Bridgette Becker
The Joy Of Birthing
Birth Fee: $800 to $1000

Angela Jenkins
Inspire Doula Services
Birth Fee: $1000 to $1400
Postpartum Rate: $30 to $40

Jamie Platt
Gold Coast Doulas
Birth Fee: Not specified
Postpartum Rate: $20 to $25
Community-Based Models

- Trained Doulas who are available for hire or who are grant supported to provide Doula services
- Generally represent the community they serve
Community-Based Doula Initiative

Model is
the Chicago Doula Project
begun in 1990s;
Evolved into Health Connect One
At Over 50 sites in U.S.

www.healthconnectone.org
Southeastern Michigan Doula Project

Our Mission

To improve the prenatal, birth, and postpartum experiences for low-income women and teens by providing comprehensive, compassionate, and evidence-based doula services.

How We Support You

We believe that everyone deserves access to a doula, even if they cannot afford one. We provide prenatal, birth and postpartum doula services to low-income families in need in Southeast Michigan. Our wonderful volunteers are the heart and soul of the Doula Project. Each of our skilled and caring doulas provides a minimum of one prenatal visit, attendance at the birth, and one postpartum visit.
On Call Program Examples

BIRTH COMPANIONS

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Birth Companions Program was started by nursing students interested in doula care. Faculty members offered the training and students provided on-call doula services.

In 1998, a two-credit clinical course was taught by a faculty and an educator certified by the Doulas of North America (DONA). The students learned about theories of maternal and community health nursing and the use of supportive techniques during childbirth, such as massage, breathing methods, different body positions, cold compresses, hot showers, and the use of birthing balls.

Presently, Birth Companions is a course and program designed to teach students how to be a doula, and work with women and families throughout the pregnancy.

To receive credit for the course, *Community Perspectives on the Childbearing Process*, students attend all classes and provide doula care to clients. The program educates student nurses to serve in a doula role and accompany women and families during the childbirth process. Students receive doula training from a DONA-certified educator and learn about maternal-child and public health from school faculty.
The Von Voightlander Women’s Birth Center offers volunteer Doula services to mothers and their families when they are admitted in labor.

**What is a Doula?**

Doulas are trained to give continuous labor and birth support to women and their families. They work with the maternity care team that includes your nurse, midwife or doctors, but they do not provide any medical care. Some of the skills and services your Doula provides include:

- Information about options and choices to support your plans for your birth experience
- Laboring position support and suggestions for comfort
- Comfort measures such as massage, hydrotherapy support, and warm/cool compresses
- Support for dads, partners, and other friends and family members
- Breastfeeding assistance if desired after your baby’s birth
- Supplying information on various community resources and referrals

**How do I get a Doula?**

Any woman admitted in labor or for an induction may request a Doula to work with her during labor and birth, free of charge. Dial-A-Doula volunteers sign up for 12-hour shifts and will arrive at the hospital within 1 hour of being called. While we cannot guarantee that a Doula will always be available or that they will be able to stay with you beyond their 12-hour shift, we can guarantee that the Dial-A-Doula Program and Birth Center staff will do everything it can to accommodate your desire and other women’s desires for a Doula.

If you would like to request a Doula volunteer right now, please tell your nurse and she can call the Doula who is on call! If you are interested in having a Doula work with you before labor we can offer referrals to other groups who offer those services. Contact DialaDoula@umich.edu with more questions.
How to Pay Doulas


“Because the benefits [of doula care] are particularly significant for those most at risk of poor outcomes, doula support has the potential to reduce health disparities and improve health equity. Doula programs in underserved communities have had positive outcomes and are expanding, but the persistent problem of unstable funding limits their reach and impact” Executive Summary p. 2
How to Pay Doulas

See *Table 2. Comparing Strategies to Expand Coverage of Doula Services* in “Medicaid and Private Insurance Coverage of Doula Care”, p. 13.

[http://transform.childbirthconnection.org/reports/doula/](http://transform.childbirthconnection.org/reports/doula/)
The Von Voightlander Women’s Birth Center offers volunteer Doula services to mothers and their families when they are admitted in labor.

What is a Doula?
Doulas are trained to give continuous labor and birth support to women and their families. They work with the maternity care team that includes your nurse, midwife or doctors, but they do not provide any medical care. Some of the skills and services your Doula provides include:

- Information about options and choices to support your plans for your birth experience
- Laboring position support and suggestions for comfort
- Comfort measures such as massage, hydrotherapy support, and warm/cool compresses
- Support for dads, partners, and other friends and family members
- Breastfeeding assistance if desired after your baby’s birth
- Supplying information on various community resources and referrals

How do I get a Doula?
Any woman admitted in labor or for an induction may request a Doula to work with her during labor and birth, free of charge. Dial-A-Doula volunteers sign up for 12-hour shifts and will arrive at the hospital within 1 hour of being called. While we cannot guarantee that a Doula will always be available or that they will be able to stay with you beyond their 12-hour shift, we can guarantee that the Dial-A-Doula Program and Birth Center staff will do everything it can to accommodate your desire and other women’s desires for a Doula.

If you would like to request a Doula volunteer right now, please tell your nurse and she can call the Doula who is on call! If you are interested in having a Doula work with you before labor we can offer referrals to other groups who offer those services. Contact DialaDoula@umich.edu with more questions.
Nothing is Simple
To Promote Optimal Outcomes for Mothers and Babies
Questions?

kanelow@med.umich.edu