



Hospital Wide Policy and Procedure Doulas

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- I. Purpose.** The purpose of this *Hospital Wide Policy and Procedure Doulas* policy (this “Policy”) is to provide guidelines for staff working with Doulas to foster a patient-centered, inclusive and doula friendly environment in the hospital. It is important to outline, understand and respect the doula’s role during the hospital stay. This is integral to hospital personnel supporting the doula’s work as part of a birthing person’s care team. This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of a doula, and ways to create welcome and inclusive space that is patient-centered and “doula friendly.” This policy reviews the benefits of doula support, to promote acceptance of doulas and to focus on six areas of respectful care: education, informed consent, decision making, quality of care, support and dignity, and non-discrimination. These standards outline the right of people giving birth to receive information about doula support and to have their doula present throughout the hospital stay, inclusive of all units.
- II. Scope.** This policy applies to any staff and Doula caring for a patient who has hired/requested a Doula during their stay at Woman and Infants Hospital.
- III. Policy.** It is the policy of Women & Infants Hospital that Patients may engage the services of Doulas. The hospital retains responsibility for the nursing care administered to patients. To fulfill this responsibility, the following definition and process will be followed:
- IV. Procedure.** A doula provides culturally sensitive emotional and informational support to the client and her support person(s).
1. Supports the client’s choices surrounding the birth.
 2. Facilitates positive, respectful, and constructive communication between the client, the support person(s), and the medical team.
 3. Recognizes that the doula operates within an integrated support system, including the client’s family and medical care providers, and facilitates informed, collaborative decision-making.
 4. Encourages the client to consult medical caregivers on any areas of medical concern. A doula does not speak for the client but may prompt the client to ask questions regarding her care/treatment.

5. Offers help and guidance on comfort measures such as breathing, relaxation, movement, positioning, comforting touch, visualization, and if available, hydrotherapy and use of a birth ball or peanut ball.
6. Supports and assists with initial breastfeeding during the first few hours after birth and provides postpartum support during the hospital stay.
Adheres to patient confidentiality in accordance to Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations.

Outside scope of practice:

7. Diagnose medical conditions or give medical advice.
 - Make decisions for the client or project the doula's own values/goals onto the client.
 - While in the doula role, perform clinical tasks such as vaginal exams or assessing fetal heart tones.
8. Administer medications.
9. Interfere with medical treatment

Creation of a Doula Friendly Hospital Environment:

10. A doula-friendly hospital is one that:
 - Recognizes that the doula has been chosen by the client to be a part of the labor support team and includes the doula as part of the integrated team for the birth.
11. Welcomes doula participation throughout the hospital stay, regardless of the number of support people identified.
12. Ensures and expects that the doula is treated with respect by the entire care team.
13. Understands that the doula supports the client and her desires.
 - Allows and supports non-medical comfort techniques for labor, including but not limited to varied labor positions, movement, breathing techniques, aromatherapy, comforting touch, visualization, hydrotherapy, and the use of a birth ball and/or peanut ball.
 - Facilitates the provision of continuous, calming support by encouraging the doula's presence throughout the patient's hospital stay.

V. Definitions. Terms not already defined in this Policy have the following meanings:

- (a) Doula: A childbirth professional who provides non-medical physical, emotional, and informational support to clients and their families before, during, and after birth. They are also known as birth champions, coaches, or supporters. This document outlines the doula's role during the hospital stay.

REFERENCES:

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REPLACES: N/A