



## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE - CERTIFIED GLOBAL DOULA

### **SCOPE AND CLINICAL LIMITATIONS**

The International Registry of Midwives' Certified Global Doula™ is a non-clinical professional trained to provide informational, emotional and physical support to mothers and families during pregnancy, labor and the immediate postpartum period (first 10 days after birth).

The International Registry of Midwives' Global Doula certification does not enable or qualify a person to act as a midwife or midwifery assistant, as any alternative medicine provider, or as any medical care provider. Birth doulas do not diagnose medical conditions, perform clinical procedures, prescribe or administer treatment for medical conditions, make medical decisions for the birthing client, or direct families to act against medical advice.

The International Registry of Midwives' Global Doula certification does not endorse a doula's knowledge or capacity to prescribe, perform or provide complementary/alternative therapies including, but not limited to, essential oils, placenta medicine, herbal treatments, massage therapy, etc.

Those doulas who are also trained, certified, licensed, or a recipient of a degree in these therapies are required to present these services as separate from their role as a Certified Global Doula™ and make it clear to their clients that those services are additional and outside of the doula's scope of practice.

For healthcare providers (doctors, nurses, midwives, chiropractors, etc.) it is required that they establish their role and work within their scope of practice when providing their services. While acting as a care provider they should not refer to themselves as doulas. However, if these professionals choose to work as a doula and limit their practice to the services provided within the doula's scope of practice, it is acceptable for them to present themselves as doulas.



## **The Do's and Don'ts**

### **Certified Global Doulas™ do:**

1. Provide objective emotional, physical and informational support during pregnancy, labor, birth process, and the immediate postpartum period
2. Work closely with the woman and family as they explore their preferences and needs regarding birth
3. Encourage the woman to seek a care provider and a place of birth that is coherent with their own values and preferences
4. Assist in the organization of a birth preferences list to facilitate communication with the birth team
5. Encourage informed decision making
6. Provide information on birth options and resources
7. Teach and promote effective communication
8. Provide the client with non-medical comfort techniques for labor
9. Seek to nurture a respectful and cooperative atmosphere with the birth team
10. Provide support to the women's support partner and/or family
11. Support and assist initial breastfeeding
12. Assist the family in processing their birth experience
13. Answer general questions about newborn care and breastfeeding
14. Refer to healthcare professionals when support requires medical care

### **Certified Global Doulas™ do not:**

1. Diagnose medical conditions
2. Perform clinical tasks or procedures
3. Interpret medical diagnoses or clinical results
4. Prescribe or administer treatment of medical conditions
5. Make decisions for the birthing woman or family
6. Speak for the birthing family
7. Attend births in the role of a care provider
8. Transport any family members
9. Prescribe, perform, or provide alternative/complementary therapies



### **WORK WITHIN THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

Birth Doulas are trained to provide information and resources for the birthing mother and family. As doulas they are not trained to perform medical tasks or give medical opinions, but they encourage informed decision making, support the choices of their clients, promote self-advocacy and offer referrals when a situation arises that require healthcare attention or support.

Birth doulas are capable of helping the mother and family in the search and understanding of information as well as orienting the client on effective communication to discuss their preferences and findings to their health care team.

### **WORK WITH FAMILIES**

Birth doulas do not replace the partner or any relative of the birthing woman and are instructed to respect the family's space. The doula is trained to provide support to those people the mother chooses to have with her during pregnancy, labor, birth and the immediate postpartum period, by offering encouragement, information and comfort.