

Medicaid Reimbursement for Doula and Home Visiting Services

[HB354](#) (Greenwood - Flowers - Gabel - Moeller - Lilly)

Parents deserve access to quality services that keep them and their children healthy. Too many families in Illinois, particularly in black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC communities), do not receive early care and education interventions proven to support successful births and proper child development. Black birthing parents are six times more likely to die from a pregnancy-related cause than their white peers, and nearly three-quarters of pregnancy-related deaths were deemed preventable.

The risk is not only that of the parent. The infant mortality rate in Illinois is 6.6 deaths per 1,000 live births, higher than the national average. The racial disparities also persist in child outcomes - the Illinois infant mortality rate for Black infants is more than double the rate for white infants. Medicaid covers almost half of all births in Illinois, but families enrolled in the state Medicaid program are at a higher risk of both severe maternal and infant mortality compared to those with private insurance.

HB354 expands the Illinois Medicaid program to include coverage for doula services and evidence-based home visiting services for individuals who qualify for medical assistance, effective July 1, 2022. Currently, 24 states finance home visiting and two states have implemented Medicaid financing doula services. Medicaid reimbursement for services is key to maximizing our state's ability to serve more families and address this ongoing crisis.

Doulas are trained providers who offer regular support to pregnant and birthing parents before, during, and after labor and delivery. The visits start prenatally and continue until at least eight weeks postpartum.

Home visiting is a voluntary, evidence-based strategy used to support pregnant people and new parents as their children's first teachers. The intervention produces positive health outcomes that are linked to significant health care savings for states and the federal government, primarily through reduced health care costs.

The Illinois Department of Public Health recommends increasing access to doula services and evidence-based home visiting programs to address the maternal mortality crisis in our state.



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