



2524 ● 16th Ave South ● Seattle WA ● 98144

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Scope

A. *Services Rendered.* The Certified Doula accompanies her client in labor, gives emotional and physical support, suggests comfort measures, and offers encouragement and suggestions for both her client and the client's partner. Whenever possible, the Doula delivers pre- and postpartum emotional support, including explanation and discussion of practices and procedures throughout the course of service.

B. *Limits to Practice.* The Certified Doula does not provide clinical care such as blood pressure or temperature monitoring, fetal heart tone checks, vaginal examinations or postpartum clinical care. PALS Doulas provide emotional, physical, and informational support.

C. *Advocacy.* The Certified Doula advocates for the client's wishes as expressed in her birth plan, in prenatal conversations, and intrapartum discussion. She helps the mother incorporate changes in plans if and when the need arises and enhances communication between the client and the caregiver. Clients and Doulas must recognize that the advocacy role does not include the Doula speaking on behalf of the Client, making decisions for the Client or causing deterioration in the relationship between Client and Caregiver. The advocacy role is best described as support, information, and mediation or negotiation.

D. *Referrals.* For client needs beyond the scope of the Doula's training, referrals are made to appropriate resources.

Continuity of Care

The Certified Doula will make back-up arrangements with other certified and/or qualified doulas to ensure services to the client if the Doula is sick or unavailable. In the event that any Doula finds it necessary to discontinue service to an established client, it is the Doula's responsibility to notify the client in writing and arrange for a replacement, if the client so desires. This may be accomplished by:

A. Introducing the client to the Doula's back-up associate.



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- B. Suggesting another Doula from PALS Doulas regarded as appropriate for the client's needs.
- C. Contacting the referral coordinator for suggestions or suggesting that the client do so.
- D. Following up with the client or back-up Doula or Referral Coordinator to make sure the client's needs are being accommodated.

Training and Experience

- A. *Training.* Doulas who are certified by PALS Doulas will have completed all the requirements set forth in the PALS Doulas Requirements for Certification. This includes but is not limited to the following: training in childbirth education and a DONA approved labor support course, reading books from the PALS Doulas Reading List, positive evaluations from three medical care providers and clients, attendance at continuing education events, two peer recommendations, three birth narratives/self-assessments and completion of a personal essay. See the PALS Doulas Requirements for Certification for complete details.
- B. *Experience.* Doulas certified by PALS Doulas will have the experience as set forth in the PALS Doulas Requirements for Certification. Participation in the PALS Doulas Pathways to Birth Program is recommended for those without experience attending births. The Certification Committee reviews packets and makes recommendations regarding certification. The Committee reserves the right to deny certification to any doula who does not complete the requirements or to those whom the committee feels are not prepared to practice as a certified doula, and to support all doulas towards obtaining the experience necessary to practice as a PALS certified doula.
- C. *Recertification.* Doulas who are certified with PALS Doulas are required to maintain continuous membership with the organization and to recertify every three years to maintain status as a certified doula (CD).

Record Keeping

- A. *Documentation.* The Doula maintains clear and accurate records of each client relationship and the birth.



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B. *Data Collection.* The Doula collects and submits to PALS Doulas on a regular basis data on the clients she provides services to, and the outcome of their pregnancies and labors.
