

ProDoula

professional & compassionate

Date: Monday, March 23, 2020

RE: ProDoula Position - COVID-19

To Whom It May Concern:

On March 17, 2020, due to the rapid spread of COVID- 19, the unknown variables associated with contracting the virus, and a desire to be in compliance with the CDC's call for social distancing, ProDoula Certification, LLC made the following unwavering recommendation to its global membership of 3,500 doulas and childbirth educators, as well as to the entire doula industry:

**ProDoula Certification, LLC recommends that ALL doulas
halt ALL in-person supportive services at this time.**

While we are confident that you are aware of the research on the benefits of doula support as well as the recent statement made by AWHONN in support of doula care (and in opposition of policies which would restrict a patient's access to **in-person** doula care) we also recognize the importance of not taxing an already over-burdened healthcare system as it prepares for an influx of more patients with the Coronavirus. We understand that the more people entering and leaving the hospital, the more it puts staff, patients, and ultimately the community in jeopardy. Therefore, it is our belief that the **risk** of additional non-medical, **in-person** doula support outweighs the **benefits** during this pandemic.

This public health crisis has the entire world adjusting to less-than-ideal circumstances. As part of this global adjustment, we are encouraging both birth and postpartum doulas to temporarily switch to providing **VIRTUAL DOULA SUPPORT** to their clients. We have already begun and will continue to provide free education to our entire industry on best practices for providing this type of support.

With virtual doula services, clients still benefit from the emotional and informational support provided by their doula. Virtually, the doula can offer affirmation and encouragement, ideas for position changes, breathing techniques that enable more relief, and a wealth of evidence-based resources to assist in making informed decisions. In the past few days, many doulas have been virtually celebrating the beautiful births (including empowering VBACs) their clients have achieved with this safe and accommodating type of support.

Doulas are experts in adjusting their support to fit the needs of each individual client. Every day they help their clients navigate the twists and turns of the unexpected during labor, birth, and the early postpartum period. Doulas have the ability to help their clients navigate THIS twist in their plan as well—VIRTUALLY.

ProDoula Certification, LLC understands that hospitals are facing extreme pressure to make decisions with limited and constantly evolving information. One of these difficult decisions is who they should allow to be present during the labor and birth process. It is our hope that by doulas voluntarily halting in-person care, it will ease the burden of decision-makers and contribute to the safety of staff and patients.

We appreciate and support every effort made by hospital leadership to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to keep their staff, patients and communities safe. We remain hopeful and look forward to the day when our communities are healthy and it is safe for doulas to once again work side-by-side with birthing families and their medical care teams.

With much respect and admiration,

Randy Patterson
CEO, ProDoula Certification, LLC