

March 21, 2023

Senator Wiklund
Chair, Health & Human Services Committee
1100 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

Together we are excited to support SF 2923 to increase the medical assistance reimbursement rates for doula services. Investing in doula services is an important strategy to improve equity in Minnesota's maternal and child health outcomes.

In 2022, the Minnesota Department of Health released its first Maternal Mortality report that highlighted disparate health outcomes for American Indian and African American Minnesotans. Black birthing people are more than twice as likely to die due to pregnancy complications and Black babies are more than twice as likely to die before their first birthday. Culturally congruent and community-based doulas are proven to lower racial disparities in healthcare by improving health outcomes, increasing breastfeeding rates, reducing childbirth complications, and reestablishing the relationship between historically marginalized communities and the medical establishment.

Investing in the comfort, care and advocacy of birthing people is necessary to protect American Indian and African American women who face difficult odds to safely deliver their babies. Increasing reimbursement rates for doula services will increase access to culturally congruent care among Medicaid eligible birthing people and improve racial equity and health outcomes for all birthing people. Rate increases will allow care providers of this historically significant profession to make a dignified living and reach birthing people who have not traditionally had access to this important care.

We can't address all negative effects of the historical trauma linked to the medical establishment, but we can do more to support American Indian and African American women have healthy pregnancies and babies. We believe all pregnant people in Minnesota deserve to feel supported during their perinatal care. Please join us in supporting SF 2923 to support the workforce promoting healthy pregnancies, positive birth outcomes, and healthy babies.

Thank you,



Organizations in Support of SF 2923:

Àbīyè Collective

Birth Equity Community Council

The Childbirth Collective

Community Aware Birthworker

Division of Indian Work

Doulas of Duluth

Doula 4 All

Empower

Everyday Miracles

HealthPartners

Hennepin Health

Little Moments Count

Medica

Minnesota Coalition for Family Home Visiting

Minnesota Council of Health Plans

Minnesota Indian Women's Resource Center

Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition

Native American Community Clinic

Northside Achievement Zone

Ramsey County Public Health