



March 21, 2023

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
1100 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Wiklund and Members of the Committee:

As the Chief Health Equity Officer for Hennepin Healthcare, I am writing in support of HF 2846/SF 2923, to increase the medical reimbursement rates for doula services in Minnesota. Research has consistently proven birthing people who have doula support have lower rates of maternal and infant complications, including lower rates of preterm and low birth weight infants; lower rates of health complications; lower rates of preterm birth and low birth weight infants; and lower rates of cesarean sections which have been associated with higher rates of maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity.

In addition to providing improved physical health outcomes, doula care has been associated with reduced rates of postpartum depression, an increase in positive feeling about the birth experience and an array of positive outcomes including improved rates of breastfeeding, and greater parental attachment and bonding. Investing in doula services is also a critical strategy for addressing the devastating impact that the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated. Common sense solutions that support birthing individuals and help alleviate the strain on the healthcare system are needed more than ever. Community-based doula services can provide culturally congruent care to marginalized communities that have been the most impacted by the pandemic since doulas usually live in the communities they serve and are often part of the fabric of the community.

Hennepin Healthcare supports HF 2846/SF 2923 bill and believes all pregnant and birthing people in the State of Minnesota deserve access to high quality perinatal doula care services. Please support this bill and help improve maternal outcomes in our state.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nneka Sederstrom
Chief Health Equity Officer
Hennepin Healthcare