

NOTICE OF INTENT
Department of Health
Bureau of Health Services Financing

Professional Services Program
Doula Services
(LAC 50:IX.Chapter 15 and Chapter 151)

The Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing proposes to adopt LAC 50:IX.Chapter 15 and Chapter 151 in the Medical Assistance Program as authorized by R.S. 36:254 and pursuant to Title XIX of the Social Security Act. This proposed Rule is promulgated in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, R.S. 49:950 et seq.

The Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, proposes to adopt provisions governing doula services in accordance with Act 228 of the 2025 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. This proposed rule establishes coverage and reimbursement criteria for nonclinical maternal health services provided by registered doulas before, during, and after childbirth. The goal of this rulemaking action is to expand access to culturally responsive support for pregnant and postpartum individuals, enhance maternal health outcomes, and reduce disparities in birth experiences throughout Louisiana.

The rule text below has been drafted utilizing plain language principles to ensure clarity and accessibility for all users. It has also been reviewed and tested for compliance with web accessibility standards.

PUBLIC HEALTH—MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Part IX. Professional Services Program

Subpart 1. General Provisions

Chapter 15. Doula Services

§1501. General Provisions

A. Effective for dates of service on or after [DAY OF PROMULGATION], the Medicaid Program shall provide reimbursement for maternal healthcare services before, during, and after childbirth provided by a registered doula in Louisiana.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254, R.S. 46:977.41-43 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 51:

§1503. Provider Qualifications

- A. A qualified doula is an individual who:
1. has been trained to provide physical, emotional, and educational support to pregnant and birthing women and their families;
 2. has approved registration with the Doula Registry Board; and
 3. enrolled as a Louisiana Medicaid provider.
- B. A qualified doula shall not provide medical or midwifery care.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254, R.S. 46:977.41-43 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 51:

§1505. Scope of Services

A. Covered doula services may include, but are not limited to:

1. assistance and attendance during labor and after childbirth, including cesarean deliveries;
2. prenatal and postpartum support and education;
3. breastfeeding assistance and lactation support;
4. parenting education; and
5. support for birthing women after the loss of a pregnancy.

B. Coverage limitations:

1. five prenatal visits for up to 90 minutes each;
- and
2. three postpartum visits for up to 90 minutes each.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254, R.S. 46:977.41-43 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 51:

Subpart 15. Reimbursement

Chapter 151. Reimbursement Methodology

Subchapter H: Doula Services

§15171. General Provisions

A. Reimbursement for doula services shall be made according to the established fee schedule or billed charges, whichever is the lesser amount.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254, R.S. 46:977.41-43 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 51:

§15173. Reimbursement Methodology

A. Effective for dates of service on or after [DAY OF PROMULGATION], reimbursement for doula services shall be a flat fee per service based on the appropriate current procedural terminology (CPT) code.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 36:254, R.S. 46:977.41-43 and Title XIX of the Social Security Act.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Department of Health, Bureau of Health Services Financing, LR 51:

Implementation of the provisions of this Rule may be contingent upon the approval of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

(CMS), if it is determined that submission to CMS for review and approval is required.

Family Impact Statement

In compliance with Act 1183 of the 1999 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the impact of this proposed Rule on the family has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have a positive impact on family functioning, stability and autonomy as described in R.S. 49:972, since it provides access to continuous, non-clinical support during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Doula services can reduce maternal stress, improve health outcomes, and promote a more stable transition into parenthood, which enhances the overall well-being of the family unit.

Poverty Impact Statement

In compliance with Act 854 of the 2012 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the poverty impact of this proposed Rule has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have a positive impact on child, individual, or family poverty in relation to individual or community asset development as described in R.S. 49:973, since it provides access to continuous, non-clinical support during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, which will reduce the financial burden for families with limited income.

Small Business Impact Statement

In compliance with the Small Business Protection Act, the economic impact of this proposed Rule on small businesses has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule may have a positive impact on small businesses, as described the Act, since it adds doula services as a covered service.

Provider Impact Statement

In compliance with House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 170 of the 2014 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, the provider impact of this proposed Rule has been considered. It is anticipated that this proposed Rule will have no impact on the staffing level requirements or qualifications required to provide the same level of service, and may impact the total direct and indirect cost to the provider to provide the same level of service if their customer base expands, and may enhance the provider's ability to provide the same level of service as described in HCR 170 because they will be receiving Medicaid reimbursement for services they provide.

Public Comments

Interested persons may submit written comments to Drew Maranto, Bureau of Health Services Financing, P.O. Box 91030, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9030. Mr. Maranto is responsible for responding to inquiries regarding this proposed Rule. The deadline for submitting written comments is November 19, 2025.

Public Hearing

Interested persons may submit a written request to conduct a public hearing by U.S. mail to the Office of the Secretary ATTN: LDH Rulemaking Coordinator, Post Office Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629; however, such request must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on November 10, 2025. If the criteria set forth in R.S. 49:961(B)(1) are satisfied, LDH will conduct a public hearing at 9:30 a.m. on November 25, 2025 in Room 118 of the Bienville Building, which is located at 628 North Fourth Street, Baton Rouge, LA. To confirm whether or not a public hearing will be held, interested persons should first call Allen Enger at (225) 342-1342 after November 10, 2025. If a public hearing is to be held, all interested persons are invited to attend and present data, views, comments, or arguments, orally or in writing.

Bruce D. Greenstein

Secretary

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

RULE TITLE: Professional Services Program

Doula Services

I. ESTIMATED IMPLEMENTATION COSTS (SAVINGS) TO STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS (Summary)

It is anticipated that implementation of this proposed rule will result in increased costs to the state of \$286,146 for FY 25-26 (six months), \$577,399 for FY 26-27, and \$583,173 for FY 27-28. It is anticipated that \$756 (\$378 SGF and \$378 FED)

will be expended in FY 25-26 for the state's administrative expense for the promulgation of the proposed rule and the final rule.

The proposed rule adds coverage and reimbursement criteria for nonclinical maternal health services provided by registered doulas before, during, and after childbirth to the Medicaid program, in accordance with Act 228 of the 2025 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. These services are already provided as in-lieu-of services by managed care organizations (MCOs) and have been accounted for in the per-member per-month capitation calculations. According to LDH, it is anticipated that the additional costs will be offset through avoidance of other services. Increased costs associated with doula services were contemplated in the MCO rates used in the FY 26 budget and are included in the appropriated budget.

II. ESTIMATED EFFECT ON REVENUE COLLECTIONS OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL UNITS (Summary)

It is anticipated that implementation of this proposed rule will result in an increase to federal revenue collections of approximately \$963,302 M for FY 25-26 (six months), \$1.9 M FY 26-27, and \$2 M FY 27-28. It is anticipated \$378 will be collected in FY 25-26 for the federal share of the expense for promulgation of this proposed rule and the final rule.

III. ESTIMATED COSTS AND/OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO DIRECTLY
AFFECTED PERSONS, SMALL BUSINESSES, OR NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS
(Summary)

The proposed rule adds Medicaid coverage and reimbursement criteria for nonclinical maternal health services provided by registered doulas before, during, and after childbirth, in accordance with Act 228 of the 2025 Regular Session. This will benefit pregnant and postpartum individuals in the Medicaid program by improving access to culturally responsive care, enhancing maternal health outcomes, and reducing disparities in birth experiences throughout Louisiana. It creates new opportunities for small businesses and independent providers by allowing them to participate in Medicaid as officially covered service providers. These services are already provided as in-lieu-of services by managed care organizations and have been accounted for in the per-member per-month capitation calculations. Costs associated with these services being transitioned to covered services are expected to be offset by the avoidance of other services. This proposed rule is expected to result in increased payments to providers of approximately \$1.2 M in FY 25-26 (six months), \$2.5 M in FY 26-27, and \$2.5 M in FY 27-28.

IV. ESTIMATED EFFECT ON COMPETITION AND EMPLOYMENT

(Summary)

This proposed rule has no known effect on competition and employment.