



Support Senate Bill 692
Senate Committee on Early Childhood and Behavioral Health
February 18th, 2025

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Anderson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Arielle Hacker and I am the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator at Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCA Oregon) - a statewide nonprofit dedicated to child and family wellbeing through community-based, comprehensive, primary prevention strategies. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of SB 692, which would provide funding for doulas and other perinatal services during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum.

Doulas are trained professionals that provide non-medical emotional, informational, physical, and practical support before, during, and after childbirth.¹ Doula care has been shown to:

- reduce the cost of birth-related healthcare,
- reduce adverse birth outcomes, and
- increase positive birth experiences.²

Research also shows that doula care can lead to shorter labors, fewer medical interventions, better postpartum recoveries, more sleep postpartum, and reductions in postpartum mood disorders.³

In Oregon, people of color face a higher risk of miscarriage and pregnancy complications.⁴ Community-based doula care emerged as a response to the significant disparities in birth outcomes based on race and ethnicity.⁵ Culturally competent doula care is a key element of a comprehensive system of care that addresses maternal and infant health disparities, improving child and family wellbeing. According to an OHA needs assessment, there are geographic disparities in access to doula care in Oregon - counties that are significantly underserved, rural areas in particular.⁶

¹ <https://www.birthfirstdoulas.com/what-is-a-doula/>

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10292163/#:~:text=The%20results%20of%20the%20study,to%20initiate%20breastfeeding%20%5B31%5D.>

³ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10292163/>

⁴ <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/oregon/report-card>

⁵ <https://www.mdpi.com/2075-4698/12/1/19>

⁶ <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/EI/Documents/Doula%20Workforce%20Needs%20Assesment%20Full%20Report%202018.pdf>

SB 692 recognizes the necessary role of doulas and lactation specialists in centering maternal and child health at the earliest stages possible, and works to fill the gaps in access:

- Define doulas in the traditional health worker statute & add postpartum doulas and Certified Lactation Counselors.
- Require private insurers and CCOs to provide information to clients on how to access doulas, postpartum doulas, and Certified Lactation Counselors.
- Require Doula coverage by all health insurance plans
- Increase coverage:
 - Up to 8 visits for doulas
 - Up to 12 visits or equivalent of 36 hours for postpartum doulas
 - Ensure parents who experience infant loss still receive doula support
- Establish a Community-Based Perinatal Provider Access Fund at Oregon Health Authority to support training and education; outreach and recruitment; expansion of doula organizations; and technical assistance to support racially, ethnically, linguistically, and geographically diverse perinatal service providers.

In summary, SB 692 will increase access to the evidence-based, compassionate, and holistic services that Oregon mothers and their babies *deserve*.

PCA Oregon partners with over 40 community-based organizations, state agencies, and advocacy coalitions to actualize our vision for an Oregon where all kids and families are living happy and purposeful lives with hope for the future. Achieving this vision hinges on providing our youngest Oregonians and their families with comprehensive, community-based support during the crucial early period of life.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Oregon's children and families.

Sincerely,

Arielle Hacker

Arielle Hacker
Strategic Initiatives Coordinator
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon