

Doula Scope of Practice Committee on State Certification

Governor's Council on Women and Girls
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Scope of Practice (SOP) Committee Process Summary

- CGS § 19a-16d to 19a-16f
- Profession submits request to DPH to establish new or revise existing SOP
- SOP request is posted for public comment (impact statements)
- Committee is comprised of the requestor and those who submitted impact statements and others the Commissioner or designee deem appropriate



Public Act 21-35 Excerpts

- “doula” means a trained, nonmedical professional who provides physical, emotional and informational support, virtually or in person, to a pregnant person before, during and after birth.
- The Commissioner of Public Health shall conduct a scope of practice review pursuant to sections 19a-16d to 19a-16f, inclusive, of the general statutes to determine whether the Department of Public Health should establish a state certification process by which a person can be certified as a doula.



Doula Scope of Practice Committee Members

- Doulas
- Commonwealth Medicine/UMASS Chan Medical School
- CT Health Foundation
- Planned Parenthood
- CT Hospital Association
- CT State Medical Society
- Health Equity Solutions
- Social Worker
- Department of Public Health
- Nurse Midwife



Doula SOP Committee Certification Discussions

- Committee generally supportive of a doula certification program if certification truly expands doula services to underserved populations who would benefit most from the services (e.g Medicaid)
- Certification may help clarify doula role for other health care providers on team
- Doulas prefer voluntary certification

Doula SOP Committee Certification Discussions

- Concerns about creating certification requirements that would lead to unintended consequences for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) doulas
- Fear that those doulas who can best serve the populations in most need could be excluded from certification.
- Certification should help address disparities, not widen them
- Is doula certification the only path to reimbursement?



Doula Certification Challenges

- No consistent training and certification requirements
 - *What would be the qualifications for certification?*
- How to capture the wide variety of doula training models, traditions, and practices, including community-based groups and doula trainers of color
- Establishing objective certification qualifications that do not exclude experienced doulas who are otherwise qualified to provide services in a safe and competent manner from certification

Community Health Worker (CHW) Certification Evolution

- P.A. 17-74 – Defined CHW & established CHW Advisory Committee through Office of Health Strategy (OHS) (previously through SIM, revised to OHS P.A. 18-91)
 - CHW Advisory Committee to develop recommendations including:
 - Requirements for CHW certification and renewal
 - Trainings, experience, and continuing education requirements
 - Methods for administering CHW certification program
 - Requirements for recognizing training curricula sufficient to satisfy certification requirements
- P.A. 19-117 – Established CHW Advisory Body within OHS and certification program through DPH
 - Voluntary certification
 - Two pathways – 1) experience-based, 2) experience and training based
 - CHW Advisory Body advises OHS & DPH on matters relating to CHW education and certification requirements, including approving CHW training programs
 - Title protection for “Certified CHWs”

Community Health Worker (CHW) Certification

- Effective January 1, 2020
- Pathway 1:
 - Completion of a CHW training approved by CHW Advisory Body
 - 1,000 hours of CHW experience during the three years prior to application
 - Professional reference from an employer
 - Community member reference
- Pathway 2:
 - 1,000 hours of CHW experience during the three years prior to application
 - Professional reference from an employer
 - Community member reference
- Since 1/1/2020, ~240 CHWs have been certified

Summary of Certification-Related Recommendations from Doula SOP Committee

- If established, certification should be voluntary
- Doulas should be involved in all aspects of establishing the requirements for certification
- Qualifications for certification should be equitable and inclusive of the various paths one may take or have taken to become a doula
- Certification should lead to the expansion of the availability of doula services to those most in need of those services vs. maintaining the status quo of primarily out of pocket payment
- Certification should not prohibit doulas who choose not to become certified from providing doula services

Thank you

