



## STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

### Scope

- A. *Services Rendered.* The Certified Doula accompanies their client continuously while in labor, gives emotional and physical support, suggests comfort measures, and offers encouragement and suggestion for both the client and the client's partner, if applicable. Whenever possible, the doula delivers prenatal and postpartum emotional support, including explanation and discussion of practices and procedures throughout the course of service.
- B. *Limits to Practice:* The Certified Doula does not provide clinical care such as blood pressure or temperature monitoring, fetal heart tone checks, vaginal examinations, or postpartum clinical care. PALS Doulas' provide emotional, physical, and informational support.
- C. *Advocacy:* The Certified Doula supports their client in self-advocating for the client's wishes as expressed in the birth plan, in prenatal conversations, and intrapartum discussions. The doula helps the family incorporate changes in plans if and when the need arises and enhances communication between the client and the caregiver. Clients and doulas must recognize that the advocacy role does not include the doula speaking on behalf of the client, making decisions for the client, or causing deterioration in the relationship between the client and caregiver. The advocacy role is best described as support, information, and mediation or negotiation.
- D. *Referrals.* For client needs beyond the scope of the doula's training, referrals are made to appropriate resources.

### Continuity of Care

The Certified Doula will make back-up arrangements with other certified and/or qualified doulas to ensure continuous services to the client if the doula is sick, unavailable, or needs to leave a laboring family while they are in labor. In the event that any doula finds it necessary to discontinue service to an established client before labor, it is the doula's responsibility to notify the client in writing and arrange for a replacement, if the client so desires. This may be accomplished by:

- Introducing the client to the doula's backup associate.
- Suggesting another doula from PALS regarded as appropriate for the client's needs.
- Contacting the Referral Coordinator for suggestions or suggesting that the client do so.
- Following up with the client or backup doula or Referral Coordinator to make sure the client's needs are being accommodated.



## **Training and Experience**

- A. *Training.* Doulas certified by PALS will have completed all the requirements set forth in the PALS Doulas Requirements for Certification. This includes but is not limited to the following: training in childbirth education and a PALS approved labor support course, completing activities from the Required Experiences list, positive evaluations from three medical care providers and clients, attendance at continuing education events, two peer recommendations, three birth narratives/self-assessments, and completion of a personal essay. See the Requirements for Certification document for complete details.
- B. *Experience.* Doulas certified by PALS will have the experience as set forth in the PALS Requirements for Certification. PALS offers two Pathways to Birth options: Mentored Pathway, and Apprenticeship Pathway. The Mentored Pathway is required, the Apprenticeship Pathway is optional and there is a fee. The Certification Committee reviews packets and makes recommendations regarding certification. Certification will not be granted to any doula that does not complete the requirements, or to doulas the committee feels are not prepared to practice as a Certified Doula. The Committee supports all doulas towards obtaining the experience necessary to practice as a PALS Certified Birth Doula.
- C. *Recertification.* Doulas certified by PALS are required to maintain continuous membership with the organization and to recertify every three years to maintain status as a Certified Doula.

## **Record Keeping**

- A. *Documentation.* The Certified Doula maintains clear and accurate records of each client relationship and the birth.
- B. *Data Collection.* The Certified Doula collects and submits data on the clients they provide services to, the outcome of their pregnancies and labors to PALS on a regular basis.