

THE  
ASSOCIATION



for Wholistic Maternal  
& Newborn Health \* happy mamas. healthy babies.

MATERNAL-CHILD HEALTH EDUCATION, TRAINING, CONSULTATION, AND SUPPORT



# Health Net Community Doula Program

Presented by

THE ASSOCIATION FOR WHOLISTIC MATERNAL AND  
NEWBORN HEALTH

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*for Wholistic*  
*Maternal*  
*& Newborn Health*  
*happy mamas. healthy babies.*

<http://motherbabysupport.net>

# What We Do

- ▶ Support and Education for Pregnancy & Early Parenthood.
- ▶ Services for Pregnant Women & New Mothers Include:
  - ▶ Childbirth Preparation Classes
  - ▶ Doula Labor Support
  - ▶ Postpartum Doula Support
  - ▶ Breastfeeding Education and Support
- ▶ Networking, Training for Maternity Care Professionals
  - ▶ Trainings, Conferences, Networking Meetings, Advocacy & Policy





Dr. Chibunna Nwaobia, MSN,  
Ph.D.



Dr. R. Ndinda Matua Ngewa,  
Dr. PH

# Meet Our Board Directors & Officers



Debbie Benton, ICCE, CD  
Secretary



Chinedu Nwaka, MBA  
Treasurer



Cordelia Hanna, MPH  
Executive Director  
Chief Executive Officer

# What is The Health Net Community Doula Program?

- ▶ A pilot program that provides African-American/Black women enrolled in Health Net Medi-Cal with mostly African-American/Black Doulas to offer:
  - ▶ **Prenatal Support**
    - ▶ Provide three prenatal visits each trimester
  - ▶ **Labor and Delivery Support**
    - ▶ Be on-call from 36 weeks until labor begins and stay for 2 hours in the immediate postpartum period
  - ▶ **Postpartum Support**
    - ▶ Provide three home visits at 3 days, 1 week, and 4-6 weeks



Photo by Maggie Ehrig

# Program Objectives

- ▶ Reduce rates of cesarean section
- ▶ Reduce maternal mortality
- ▶ Reduce Preterm Labor
- ▶ Reduce low birth weight and prematurity
- ▶ Increase rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration
- ▶ increase maternal satisfaction with the childbirth experience.



Illustration by The Educated Birth

# HEALTH NET COMMUNITY DOULA PROGRAM: OVERVIEW



## Doula Support

Childbirth Companion Support



## Our Doula Team

10 African-American Doulas serving 150 African-American Women



## Childbirth Education Classes

Helping Clients Make Informed Choices in Childbirth



## Father's Support Group

Discussion and Support Group for Fathers

# Meet the Health Net Community Doula Team



Brittney Hinton



Destinee Dewalt-Chase



Felicia Francis-Edwards



Nakomi Kirby



Hannah Halliwell



Michelle Sanders



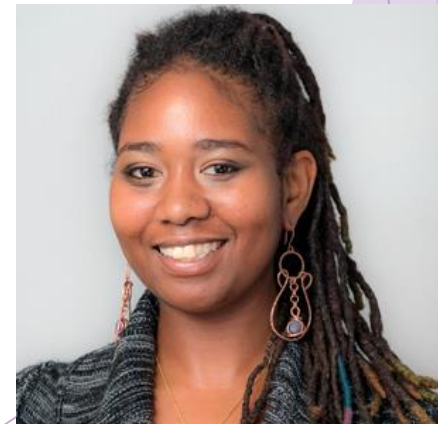
Latrice Matthews



Bethany Benson



Cinnamon Buckley



Nashuwah Abdulmaged

# Health Net Community Doula Program Health Educators



Katrina Nelson, CD, CPD, ICCE  
Childbirth Educator



Kofi Peprah, MS, M.Phil.  
Father's Group Facilitator

# Health Net Community Doula Program Leadership Team



Doula Supervisors (L to R): Arianna Smith, RN, MSN, PNP, Dr. Sayida Peprah, Psy.D., CD, Khefri Riley, CD, CLEC, HBHD, CPYT and Program Director: Cordelia Hanna, MPH, CHES, ICCE, CLE, CBA



Dr. Pooja Mittal, MD  
Medical Director, Health Net

# Health Net Community Doula Program Administrative Staff



Charles Copeland, CPA  
Accountant



Debbie Benton, ICCE, CEHC, CD  
Administrative Assistant



Dr. Robert Lancione, Ph.D.  
Chief Information Officer/  
HIPPA Compliance  
Officer/Webmaster

# Meet Our Interns



Jasmine Smith  
Nursing Student- BSN  
Azusa Pacific University



Leah Walker  
Nursing Student- BSN  
Azusa Pacific University



Elsie Gutierrez  
MPH Student, USC

# What is a Doula?

- ▶ Doula is a Greek word that means “woman-servant”
- ▶ Doulas are professional childbirth companions who provide non-medical support for pregnant women and persons including emotional support, physical comfort and advocacy to women and persons during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum.
- ▶ Doulas are also trained to recognize and refer clients who have medical problems so that they can get medical attention in a timely manner.
- ▶ Doula support does not replace the medical care provided by a doctor, midwife or nurse, or the support of family members or partners.



# The Community-Based Doula Model

## Conventional Doula

- ▶ Meets client in late pregnancy; usually 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester
- ▶ Works with dominant culture women i.e., Caucasian, college-educated, privately insured women
- ▶ Doula is often Caucasian/White and college educated like the clients she serves
- ▶ Does one follow up in postpartum period
- ▶ Works in private practice or independent group practice

## Community-Based Doula

- ▶ Meets client in early pregnancy
- ▶ From same cultural background and/or community as client; therefore has cultural competency and linguistic capability to work with population
- ▶ Does 3-4 postpartum visits through 8 weeks postpartum
- ▶ Trained in social determinants of health, perinatal and reproductive health justice
- ▶ Has knowledge of historical trauma and inequities related to racism
- ▶ Respects cultural and religious traditions of client
- ▶ Works in public health setting; usually for agencies working on improving access for women and persons of color
- ▶ Works with special populations ie; homeless, teens, incarcerated, those in recovery from substance abuse, LGBTQ, etc. often through a social service agency

**ACOG  
Committee  
Opinion No. 687  
(2017)**

*Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth<sup>2</sup>*

*“Evidence suggests that, in addition to regular nursing care, continuous one-to-one emotional support provided by support personnel, such as a doula, is associated with improved outcomes for women in labor.”*

# Why do we need Doulas?



Objectives for maternal-infant health are impacted by childbirth practices.

U.S. spends more money per capita on maternity and newborn care than any other country, yet falls behind most industrialized countries in perinatal and maternal morbidity and mortality.

Midwives attend the vast majority of births in those industrialized countries with the best perinatal outcomes, yet in the United States, midwives are the principal attendants at only a small percentage of births;

High costs, inferior outcomes including the inappropriate application of technology and routine procedures that are not based on scientific evidence.

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark skin and curly hair, looking down at a newborn baby she is holding. The woman's face is partially visible, showing her eyes and nose. The baby is wrapped in a white blanket. The image is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping a purple geometric background.

# Why do we need Doulas?

- ▶ Increased dependence on technology has diminished confidence in women's innate ability to give birth without intervention;
  - ▶ The integrity of the mother-child relationship compromised by the obstetrical treatment of mother and baby as if they were separate units with conflicting needs;
  - ▶ Although breastfeeding has been scientifically shown to provide optimum health, nutritional, and developmental benefits to newborns and their mothers, only a fraction of U.S. mothers are fully breastfeeding their babies by the age of six weeks.
- ▶ From the preamble to the MFCI by CIMS.



# Rationale for Program: Los Angeles County

- ▶ Premature Births and Infant Mortality are Higher for African-American Infants.
- ▶ Cesarean Rates are Highest Among African-American Women.
- ▶ While cesarean section is sometimes needed and can be life-saving in some situations, repeat cesareans increase the risk of maternal death and disability and infant death. Experts agree that the cesarean rate for any population, the c-section rate should not be over or below 15% .
- ▶ Maternal Deaths are Highest Among African-American Women.
- ▶ Breastfeeding Rates are Lower Among African-American Women.



## Results of Doula Support: Cochrane Review (2017)

### Continuous Support for Women During Childbirth<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ A mixed-methods systematic review
- ▶ Total of 26 trials
- ▶ 17 different countries
- ▶ 10 trials the providers were doulas

## Results of Doula Support: Cochrane Review (2017)

“Continuous support during labor may improve outcomes for women and infants including increased spontaneous vaginal birth, shorter duration of labor, decreased caesarean birth, instrumental vaginal birth, use of any analgesia, use of regional analgesia, low five-minute Apgar score and negative feelings about childbirth experiences.”



Illustration by The Educated Birth



Illustration by The Educated Birth

## Summary of Outcomes of Doula Support

- ▶ Decreased use of pain medication
- ▶ Decreased medical interventions
- ▶ Decreased rates of induction and augmentation of labor
- ▶ Decreased rates of cesarean section and repeat cesarean
- ▶ Decreased length of labor
- ▶ Decreased maternal depression
- ▶ Increased maternal satisfaction with the birth experience
- ▶ Increased VBAC (Vaginal Birth After Cesarean) and Breastfeeding Success

# The Doula Scope of Practice

## Advocate & Educate

- Support clients with complying with their Medical provider recommendations
- Encourage clients to keep all prenatal and postpartum medical appointments
- Help client ask for what she wants in labor
- Explain what the doctor, midwife or nurse wants to do and why
- Inform clients of risks and benefits of medical decisions
- Encourages Informed Consent and Refusal
- Help the client and her partner communicate with health care providers and decide what they want to do
- Provides language interpretation if needed
- Encourages Client's Religious/Spiritual Practices
- Advocates for Respect of Client's Cultural Traditions
- Protects Client Privacy and Intimacy

## Provide Emotional Support

- Encouragement
- Reassurance
- Empathy
- Praise
- Affirmation

## Recognize & Refer

Doula will educate client and refer to her primary medical provider if there are:

- Danger signs of pregnancy/labor
- Danger signs of postpartum
- Danger signs in the newborn

# What Do Health Net Doulas Do?

## ▶ DURING PREGNANCY

- ▶ Emotional Support to ameliorate the effects of racism stressors caused by microaggressions and discrimination and prejudice. Includes training on mindfulness and relaxation and reframing techniques.
- ▶ Educates about healthy nutrition & exercise
- ▶ Teaches relaxation and mindfulness methods to reduce stress and anxiety
- ▶ Gives suggestions for coping with common discomforts of pregnancy
- ▶ Discusses options for childbirth, including pain medication options
- ▶ Discusses how to avoid an unnecessary cesarean
- ▶ Teaches labor coping skills and support methods to birth partners
- ▶ Helps client to create a birth plan
- ▶ Discusses rights and responsibilities of pregnant women and persons



# What Do Health Net Doulas Do?

## ▶ DURING LABOR AND DELIVERY

### ▶ Physical Support

- ▶ Provides Physical Comfort and Massage
- ▶ Suggests Water Immersion for Pain Relief
- ▶ Encourages Vocalization
- ▶ Suggests positions that will make labor more comfortable and make labor go faster

### ▶ Provide Emotional Support

- ▶ Encouragement
- ▶ Reassurance
- ▶ Empathy
- ▶ Praise
- ▶ Affirmation

### ▶ Advocate & Educate

- ▶ Help client ask for what she wants in labor
- ▶ Explain what the doctor, midwife or nurse wants to do and why
- ▶ Inform clients of risks and benefits of medical decisions
- ▶ Protects Client Privacy and Intimacy
- ▶ Ensure each “mamababy” is treated with kindness, dignity and respect



# What Do Health Net Doulas Do?

## DURING POSTPARTUM:

- Encourages and offers support to mother in breastfeeding her baby
- Instructs mother on how to care for herself after birth
- Provides emotional support to new mothers and partners or fathers
- Helps with meal preparation & baby laundry
- Teaches new parents how care for baby including bathing, diapering, swaddling, slinging, soothing
- Encourages mother to rest so she can recover from childbirth
- Encourages parents to reflect on their childbirth experience
- Encourages parents to find support if they are feeling sad and blue
- Educates about risks and benefits of newborn procedures (circumcision, etc.)
- Connects families to resources they need (i.e., breastfeeding support groups, prenatal yoga, etc.)



*Illustration by The Educated Birth*



## Doula Scope of Practice

- ▶ Our Doulas are trained to “Recognize and Refer “ to PCP if medical attention is needed. They understand the limitations of their practice
  - ▶ If concerns arise regarding the health of the client to the proper resources

Doulas, Doctors,  
Nurses and  
Partners Work  
Together



# Doulas Partner with Providers

- ▶ Doulas are **not** there to replace providers, but to **advocate for and educate clients and to provide emotional support and physical comfort**. They are also able to **recognize and refer** for complications.
  - ▶ Help educate clients about Pregnancy and Childbirth and Postpartum
  - ▶ Help explain to client provider's recommendations and the importance of prenatal care and address any barriers to compliance
  - ▶ Encourage client to ask for what she wants in labor
  - ▶ Encourage informed joint decision-making
  - ▶ Support patient's religious/spiritual practices /cultural traditions
  - ▶ Advocate for respectful, patient-centered care
  - ▶ Recognize and Refer for any medical or psychosocial complications or emergencies in pregnancy, labor, postpartum or the newborn



# How Doctors, Midwives and Doulas Work Together



Late Nurse Midwife Debbie Frank, CNM who delivered Kendra and Kendra's baby. (From Alanis.com)

“ I know that if my patient has diabetes, I am not going to leave my office and go to her house to help her. But I do know if she has a Doula, she will walk with her and bring her healthy food to eat. She will encourage her to stick with the nutrition plan.”

- A Westside OB/GYN

# Differences Between Doulas and Nurses's Support

- ▶ There are some similarities between what Nurses and Doulas do. There are nine strategies that Doulas and Nurses do alike. **However, five were original and described as only being used by Doulas. Professional doulas utilize intricate and complex emotional support skills when providing continuous support for women in labor. Application of these skills may provide an explanation for the positive 'Doula Effect'** (Gilliland, 2011).
- ▶ Gilliland found that there were **nine strategies that Doulas and Nurses both do. Reassurance, encouragement, praise, and explaining** were similar to those attributed to nurses in published research.
- ▶ However, **Five were original and described as only being used by Doulas: mirroring, acceptance, reinforcing, reframing, debriefing.**
- ▶ **Conclusions from Gilliland's research are that emotional support by professional birth Doulas is more complex and sophisticated than previously surmised.** Mothers experienced these strategies as extremely meaningful and significant with their ability to cope and influencing the course of their labor.
- ▶ Implications for practice are great. The Doula's role in providing emotional support is distinct from the obstetric nurse, doctor and midwife.



## Additional Services of The Health Net Community Doula Program

- ▶ **Fathers' Support Group**
  - ▶ Lead by Black father's African-American/Black dad who is experienced father and college professor
- ▶ **Childbirth Education Classes**
  - ▶ 4-week series of classes entitled, "Empowered Birth Choices" taught by Certified Childbirth Educator. These sessions are also taught one-on-one with the clients by the Doulas.

# How To Refer Someone or Enroll

- ▶ **Contact us at (626) 388-2191 ext. 1 or  
Email: [inquiry@motherbabysupport.net](mailto:inquiry@motherbabysupport.net)**
- ▶ **Visit our website at:  
<http://motherbabysupport.net>**
- ▶ **Twitter: [#blackmamasandbabiesmatter](https://twitter.com/blackmamasandbabiesmatter) |  
Facebook: [@happymamashealthybabies](https://www.facebook.com/happymamashealthybabies)**

# Questions for Doulas

- ▶ Why is Doula support so important for African-American women?
- ▶ How can we, as allies, support the work of Black/African-American Birth Workers?
- ▶ If we have African-American/Black clients, what is your advice on how best to support them?