

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 454

BY REPRESENTATIVES MILLER, BOYD, BRASS, WILFORD CARTER, CHASSION, FISHER, HUGHES, JACKSON, KNOX, LAFLEUR, MANDIE LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, LYONS, MARCELLE, MENA, MOORE, SPELL, STAGNI, TAYLOR, WALTERS, AND WILLARD AND SENATORS BARROW, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, DUPLESSIS, JACKSON-ANDREWS, MIZELL, PRICE, AND SELDERS

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Part V of Chapter 8 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be
3 comprised of R.S. 46:977.41 through 977.43, relative to Medicaid insurance
4 coverage for doula services; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for
5 definitions; to require Medicaid coverage for maternity services provided by doulas;
6 to provide for enrollment qualifications; to assign certain duties to the Louisiana
7 Department of Health; to provide for applicability; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. Part V of Chapter 8 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,
10 comprised of R.S. 46:977.41 through 977.43, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 PART V. MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DOULAS

12 §977.41. Legislative findings

13 The legislature hereby affirms all of the following:

14 (1) Leading professional societies, such as the American College of
15 Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, and
16 federal agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health
17 Resources and Services Administration, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
18 Services, have recognized the well-established benefits of doula services.

19 (2) In January 2025, Louisiana was selected as one of the states to participate
20 in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Transforming Maternal Health
21 Model. The model is designed to focus exclusively on improving maternal
22 healthcare for people enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance
23 Program. The model supports participating state Medicaid agencies in the

1 development of a whole-person approach to pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum
2 care that addresses the physical, mental health, and social needs experienced during
3 pregnancy. The goal of the model is to reduce disparities in access and treatment.
4 The model aims to improve outcomes and experiences for mothers and their
5 newborns, while also reducing overall program expenditures. This model urges
6 states to address gaps in maternal healthcare using doulas.

7 (3) Research has demonstrated that support from a doula is associated with
8 lower cesarean section rates, fewer obstetric interventions, fewer complications
9 during and after childbirth, decreased use of pain medication, shorter labor hours,
10 and higher scores on the Appearance, Pulse, Grimace, Activity, and Respiration, or
11 APGAR, test, which indicates how well the baby is doing outside the womb.

12 (4) As a state, Louisiana consistently ranks in the top five states for maternal
13 and infant mortality and morbidity in the United States, which is indicative of a
14 maternity healthcare crisis. It is well established that the use of doulas in maternal
15 healthcare makes a difference in improving outcomes and lowering healthcare costs
16 for the mother and infant.

17 §977.42. Definitions; health coverage; policy provisions

18 A. For purposes of this Section, the following definitions apply:

19 (1) "Doula" means an individual who has been trained to provide physical,
20 emotional, and educational support, but not medical or midwifery care, to pregnant
21 and birthing women and their families before, during, and after childbirth.

22 (2) "Doula treatment or care" means any maternal healthcare services
23 rendered by a registered doula in this state.

24 B. Any Medicaid coverage plan delivered or issued for delivery in this state
25 that provides benefits for maternity services shall include coverage for services
26 provided by a doula before, during, and after childbirth as provided in R.S.
27 46:977.43. The coverage scope of services and rates shall be determined by the
28 Louisiana Department of Health using market benchmarks and comparisons to
29 similar state rates.

30 C. Doula services shall include but not be limited to all the following:

1 (1) Support and assistance during labor and childbirth.

2 (2) Prenatal and postpartum support and education.

3 (3) Breastfeeding assistance and lactation support.

4 (4) Parenting education.

5 (5) Support for a birthing woman after the loss of a pregnancy.

6 D. At minimum, each Medicaid plan shall comply with the provisions in
7 R.S. 40:977.43 and provide coverage for all of the following services:

8 (1) Five prenatal visits for up to ninety minutes.

9 (2) Three postpartum visits for up to ninety minutes.

10 (3) Assistance and attendance during labor and birth including cesarean
11 deliveries.

12 E.(1) The requirements established by Medicaid managed care plans to
13 ensure the services provided by a doula before, during, and after childbirth shall not
14 be construed to preclude a doula from practice in this state.

15 (2)(a) A doula may opt to practice in this state and forego any eligible
16 reimbursement via a health coverage plan.

17 (b) Doulas opting for reimbursement via a Medicaid managed care plan shall
18 have approved registration by the Louisiana Doula Registry Board.

19 F. All doulas with approved registration with the Louisiana Doula Registry
20 Board shall have acceptance as a provider of such services with all Louisiana
21 Medicaid plans in accordance with Medicaid rulemaking.

22 G. Terminology in any Medicaid managed care plan or contract deemed
23 discriminatory against doulas and doula services is void and unenforceable.

24 §977.43. Required Medicaid coverage for doulas

25 A. The Louisiana Medicaid program shall cover inpatient and, if deemed
26 appropriate, outpatient coverage for doula treatment or care when such care or
27 treatment is used for a medically accepted indication and administered in any
28 healthcare facility by any healthcare professional appropriately registered in this
29 state to provide doula treatment or care in accordance with state and federal
30 guidelines or certifications.

1 B. A prospective enrollee shall be considered eligible for doula treatment or
 2 care enrollment if the individual satisfies all of the following qualifications:

3 (1) The individual is enrolled in the Louisiana Medicaid program.

4 (2) A licensed healthcare provider has certified that the individual is
 5 pregnant or in the postpartum period.

6 (3) The pregnant or postpartum woman requests or consents to the use of
 7 doula services.

8 C. Pursuant to this Section, the secretary of the Louisiana Department of
 9 Health shall do all the following:

10 (1) Submit to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services all necessary
 11 state plan amendments.

12 (2) Promulgate and adopt all necessary rules in accordance with the
 13 Administrative Procedure Act.

14 (3) Take any other actions necessary to implement the provisions of this Part.

15 Section 2.(A) The provisions of Subsection B of R.S. 46:977.42 as enacted by
 16 Section 1 of this Act shall apply to any new Medicaid managed care plan issued on and after
 17 August 1, 2025.

18 (B) Any Medicaid managed care plan in effect prior to August 1, 2025, shall convert
 19 to conform to the provisions of this Part on or before the renewal date, but no later than
 20 January 1, 2026.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____