

**Missouri State Medical Association  
House of Delegates**

Resolution # 14  
(A-24)

Introduced by: Karen Brianna Dale, Saint Louis University School of Medicine, Class of 2026;  
Dr. Adriana Canas-Polesel, MD, FACOG & Women Physicians Section of MSMA

Subject: Doula Care Coverage and Reimbursement

Referred to:

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1 **WHEREAS**, nearly 700 women die each year in the United States as a result of pregnancy or delivery  
2 complications with the rate having increased by 56% over the last two decades;<sup>1</sup> and,

3  
4 **WHEREAS**, the CDC states that sixty percent of those maternal mortality outcomes are preventable;<sup>2</sup>  
5 and,

6  
7 **WHEREAS**, socially disadvantaged mothers are at higher risk of adverse birth outcomes;<sup>3</sup> and,

8  
9 **WHEREAS**, Missouri ranks number forty-four out of all 50 states on maternal mortality;<sup>3</sup> and,

10  
11 **WHEREAS**, in Missouri, Black women are three times more likely to die from complications related to  
12 pregnancy and delivery than white women; <sup>3</sup> and,

13  
14 **WHEREAS**, this disparity in birthing outcomes persists across income and education levels suggesting  
15 that implicit racism in the healthcare system directs these trends;<sup>1</sup> and,

16  
17 **WHEREAS**, this disparity is propagated by cultural differences and generational distrust between  
18 vulnerable populations and healthcare professionals;<sup>4</sup> and,

19  
20 **WHEREAS**, perinatal and postnatal doula care can improve maternal health and address racial  
21 inequities; <sup>5</sup> and,

22  
23 **WHEREAS**, doula care is correlated with decreased cesarean rates and use of pain medication,  
24 decreased rates of gestational hypertension, decreased rates of preterm births, and earlier onset  
25 breastfeeding; <sup>6</sup> and,

26  
27 **WHEREAS**, in Missouri, a large proportion of births in rural underserved communities and for  
28 marginalized populations are covered by Medicaid;<sup>1</sup> and,

29  
30 **WHEREAS**, as doula care is not covered nor reimbursable under most health insurance plans including  
31 Medicaid, this valuable resource is inaccessible to the populations who need it most; therefore, be it,

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33 **RESOLVED**, that our MSMA recognize the benefit of comprehensive care of pregnant and birthing  
34 populations including culturally competent community resources like doula care within the existing  
35 obstetric care team; and be it further,

36

37 **RESOLVED**, that our MSMA support legislation that creates pathways for health insurance coverage for  
38 doula services in Missouri, provided that these pathways include a standardized doula certification  
39 process as a prerequisite.

**Fiscal Note:** None

**Current Policy:**

References:

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5. Safon CB, McCloskey L, Gordon SH, Cole MB, Clark J. Medicaid Reimbursement for Doula Care: Policy Considerations From a Scoping Review. *Med Care Res Rev*. 2023 Dec 20:10775587231215221. doi: 10.1177/10775587231215221. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 38124279.
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