

**SENATE . . . . . No. 1475**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Joan B. Lovely***

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Joan B. Lovely</i>	<i>Second Essex</i>	
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>26th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/22/2021</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/22/2021</i>
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>2/23/2021</i>
<i>Carmine Lawrence Gentile</i>	<i>13th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Tami L. Gouveia</i>	<i>14th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/1/2021</i>
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>3/4/2021</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>3/5/2021</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>Anne M. Gobi</i>	<i>Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/11/2021</i>
<i>Susan L. Moran</i>	<i>Plymouth and Barnstable</i>	<i>3/15/2021</i>
<i>John J. Cronin</i>	<i>Worcester and Middlesex</i>	<i>3/16/2021</i>
<i>Julian Cyr</i>	<i>Cape and Islands</i>	<i>3/20/2021</i>
<i>Harriette L. Chandler</i>	<i>First Worcester</i>	<i>4/8/2021</i>



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By Ms. Lovely, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 1475) of Joan B. Lovely, Mike Connolly, Jack Patrick Lewis, Christina A. Minicucci and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services. Public Health.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE HOUSE, NO. 4780 OF 2019-2020.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act relative to Medicaid coverage for doula services.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 Chapter 118E of the General Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section 10L the  
2 following section:-

3 SECTION 10M: Medicaid Coverage for Doula Services.

4 (a) For purposes of this section, the following words shall have the following meanings:

5 "A perinatal doula" or referred to hereafter as "doula", is a trained professional who  
6 provides physical, emotional, and informational support, but not medical care, for pregnant  
7 individuals, surrogates, foster care parents and adoptive parents during and after pregnancy,  
8 labor, childbirth, miscarriage, stillbirth or loss. Doulas provide services, including but not limited  
9 to:

- 10 (1) providing continuous labor support to pregnant individuals, families, surrogates, and  
11 adoptive parents;
- 12 (2) conducting prenatal, postpartum, and bereavement home or in-person visits  
13 throughout the perinatal period, lasting until 1 year after birth, pregnancy loss,  
14 stillbirth, or miscarriage;
- 15 (3) accompanying pregnant individuals to health care and social services appointments;
- 16 (4) providing support to individuals for loss of pregnancy or infant from conception  
17 through age 1;
- 18 (5) connecting individuals to community-based and state- and federally-funded  
19 resources, including those which address needs within the social determinants of health;
- 20 (6) engaging in administrative tasks related to these services; and
- 21 (7) making oneself available (being on-call) around the time of birth or loss as well as  
22 providing support for any concerns of pregnant individuals throughout pregnancy and until 1  
23 year after birth, pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or miscarriage.

24 (b) (1) Coverage of Doula Services:

25 The division shall provide coverage for doula services throughout the Commonwealth of  
26 Massachusetts for pregnant individuals, surrogates, foster parents and adoptive parents.

27 (2) In partnership with the doula care commission, MassHealth and the department of  
28 public health shall establish and maintain a registry of doulas who are eligible for  
29 reimbursement; establish processes for billing and reimbursement of doula services; and  
30 determine competencies a doula must demonstrate in order for their services to be reimbursed by  
31 MassHealth; and establish processes for doulas to demonstrate proof of competencies.

32 (i) Competencies shall include, but are not limited to:

33 (A) understanding of basic anatomy and physiology as related to pregnancy, the  
34 childbearing process, the postpartum period, breast-milk feeding, breastfeeding and  
35 chestfeeding;

36 (B) capacity to employ different strategies for providing emotional support, education  
37 and resources during the perinatal period;

38 (C) knowledge of and ability to assist families with a wide variety of non-clinical labor  
39 coping strategies;

40 (D) strategies to foster effective communication between clients, their families, support  
41 services and health care providers;

42 (E) awareness of and ability to provide information on integrative health care systems  
43 and various specialties of care to address client needs beyond the scope of practice of the doula;

44 (F) knowledge of community-based, state- and federally-funded, and clinical resources  
45 available to address client needs beyond the scope of practice of the doula; and

46 (G) knowledge of HIPAA compliance and client confidentiality.

47 (ii) In addition to the above competencies, doulas serving members of MassHealth shall  
48 also show competency or demonstrate actively seeking training or engagement in the areas of:

49 (A) health equity;

50 (B) implicit bias;

51 (C) racism, including structural, interpersonal, and institutionalized racism;

52 (D) reproductive and birth justice;

53 (E) cultural sensitivity and humility;

54 (F) trauma-informed care, including for survivors of sexual assault or birth trauma;

55 (G) parental mental health needs;

56 (H) needs of persons with disabilities or disabled persons;

57 (I) sexual and gender identities; and

58 (J) social determinants of health.

59 (c) Creation of Doula Care Commission

60 There is hereby created a doula care commission. The commission shall provide  
61 recommendations on the implementation and evaluation of doula care reimbursement.

62 (1) The commission shall consist of no more than 15 members, including the  
63 commissioner of public health, or designee; the commissioner of insurance, or designee; the

64 commissioner of the department of children and families, or designee; the director of Medicaid,  
65 or designee; at least 5 doulas to be appointed by the commissioner of public health, or designee;  
66 and no more than 6 other members to be appointed by the commissioner of public health, or  
67 designee.

68 (2) At least 5 of the members of the commission shall be doulas; provided, that a majority  
69 of the doula members shall be from racial or ethnic populations most affected by inequities in  
70 birth outcomes in the Commonwealth, as evidenced by the most current

71 perinatal data supplied by the MA Department of Public Health. Other members of the  
72 commission shall include at least:

73 (i) 2 persons who have experienced pregnancy as a MassHealth member or are currently  
74 recipients of MassHealth;

75 (ii) 1 person who identifies as belonging to the LBTQIA+ community;

76 (iii) 1 person who is a survivor who has experienced sexual assault and/or birth trauma;

77 (iv) 1 person who is a survivor who has experienced a severe maternal morbidity, a  
78 perinatal

79 mental health or mood disorder, or a near-death experience while pregnant or in  
80 maternity care;

81 (v) 1 person who is a family member affected by infant loss, miscarriage, or infertility;

82 (vi) 1 person who identifies as a person with disabilities or disabled person;

83 (vii) 1 person who has an advanced degree in health economics or public health;

- 84 (viii) 1 person who is qualified in actuarial sciences;
- 85 (ix) 1 person who is a representative from the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans;
- 86 (x) 1 person who is an obstetrician, family physician or midwife; and
- 87 (xi) 1 person who has experience in workforce development, supervision, training and
- 88 mentoring of community doulas.

89 Representatives on the Doula Care Commission shall strive to include representation

90 from

91 areas within the Commonwealth where maternal and infant outcomes are worse than the

92 state

93 average, as evidenced by the most current perinatal data supplied by the MA Department

94 of

95 Public Health.

96 (4) The purposes of the commission shall include, but not be limited to:

97 (a) developing recommendations for required doula competencies;

98 (b) developing recommendations for standards of proof or demonstration of competency

99 or equivalency for required doula competencies;

100 (c) developing recommendations for a diverse doula and doula trainer workforce

101 development strategy, including, but not limited to, a focus on accessible continuing

102 education/training activities, mentorship and career growth opportunities;



103 (d) developing recommendations for standards and processes around billing for and  
104 reimbursement of services;

105 (e) ensuring the racial, ethnic, cultural, geographic, and professional diversity of  
106 standing membership of the commission;

107 (f) representing the interests of doulas in communication with state entities and the  
108 health care system;

109 (g) receiving any grievances from doulas, doula clients, healthcare providers, and health  
110 systems and making recommendations to resolve those grievances;

111 (h) overseeing communications to the public and various stakeholders about access to  
112 doula care and reimbursement;

113 (i) advising on the evaluation of outcomes, access to, and satisfaction with doula care  
114 services;

115 (j) approving a reimbursement amount for doula services and related activities listed in  
116 subsection (a) that constitutes a living and fair wage for doulas who reside in all areas of the  
117 commonwealth, as well as establishing a recurring timeframe to review the established wage in  
118 light of recent data on living and fair wages in the commonwealth;

119 (k) establishing a plan for the scaling of provision doula services and growing the  
120 workforce of doulas, in order to increase access to MassHealth members; and

121 (l) ensuring all aims of the commission, the establishment of reimbursement for doula  
122 services, the growth of a diverse workforce of doulas, and all other aims are directed towards the  
123 goal of reducing inequities in maternal and birth outcomes among racial, ethnic, and cultural

124 populations who reside in all areas within the commonwealth, as evidenced by the most current  
125 perinatal data supplied by the department of public health.

126 (5) The commission may conduct public hearings, forums or meetings to gather  
127 information and to raise awareness of access to doula care, including the sponsorship of or  
128 participation in statewide or regional conferences.

129 (6) The commission shall file a report within 12 months of initiation to the Governor, the  
130 commissioner of public health, and the director of Medicaid detailing the activities of the  
131 commission; a strategic or implementation plan for each of the purposes listed in paragraph (4); a  
132 process evaluation plan for implementation objectives; and an outcome evaluation plan for  
133 maternal and infant outcomes, once reimbursement of doula care is implemented, with a goal of  
134 initiating reimbursement of doula services within 18 months of filing  
135 the report.

136 (d) Payment for Doula Services:

137 (1) MassHealth shall make an initial recommendation of the reimbursement amount for  
138 doula services no later than 3 months from the initiation of the doula care commission. The  
139 recommendation shall reflect evidenced consideration of a livable and fair wage for doulas who  
140 reside within all areas of the commonwealth, and shall include an amount for support during  
141 labor and childbirth; an amount for visits during and after pregnancy, childbirth, miscarriage,  
142 stillbirth, or loss that relate to activities listed in subsection (a); a schedule by which doula  
143 services can be reimbursed up to 1 year after birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, or loss; and travel-  
144 related expenses related to the delivery of those services.

145           (2) The recommended reimbursement amount shall be approved by the doula care  
146 commission prior to being enacted.

147           (3) MassHealth shall aim to initiate reimbursement of doula services within 18 months of  
148 the report of the doula care commission.