

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES
2025-2026 (194th) BILL SUMMARY**

Bill No: H1312

Title: AN ACT RELATIVE TO INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR DOULA SERVICES

Sponsor: Rep. Lindsay N. Sabadosa (*Northampton*)

Hearing Date: April 29, 2025

Reporting Deadline: June 28, 2025

Prior History:

2023-24 (H1139): Reported favorably; Referred to Health Care Financing; Reported favorably; Referred to HWM

Similar Matters: S789 (Miranda – Identical); H1333 (Tyler)

CURRENT LAW:

M.G.L. c. 32A Contributory Group General or Blanket Insurance for Persons in the Service of the Commonwealth (Group Insurance Commission)

M.G.L. c. 111 Public Health § 70E Patients' and Residents' Rights

M.G.L. c. 175 Insurance

M.G.L. c. 176A Non-Profit Hospital Service Corporations (Blue Cross of Massachusetts)

M.G.L. c. 176B Medical Service Corporations (Blue Shield of Massachusetts)

M.G.L. c. 176G Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)

Chapter 186 Acts of 2024, An Act promoting access to midwifery care and out-of-hospital birth options § 41

MassHealth policies will provide coverage for doula services to pregnant and postpartum individuals up to 12 months following the end of pregnancy.

SUMMARY:

- This bill defines “Doula Services” as physical, emotional, and informational support, but not medical care, provided by trained doulas to individuals and families from conception until twelve months after pregnancy, labor, childbirth, adoption, miscarriage, stillbirth or abortion.
- The Group Insurance Commission and commercial health insurers will provide coverage for all doula services without patient cost-sharing or referral requirements.

- Doulas will be reimbursed for their services at rates no lower than those paid by MassHealth.
- Policies will cover, without prior authorization, a minimum of twenty hours of prenatal and postpartum doula services per pregnancy, and continuous support throughout labor and delivery.
- Policies will not impose limitations on the amount of time a doula can bill per patient per day. Policies will establish a process to approve coverage of additional hours of doula services in cases where the patient has heightened risk or need.
- Policies will follow the doula credentialing requirements developed by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and will be prohibited from imposing additional requirements. Any MassHealth approved Doula will be deemed as meeting all credentialing requirements.
- This bill creates a Doula Advisory Committee of 10-12 members appointed by the Governor. The members of the committee will represent an equitable geographic distribution from across the Commonwealth, including representation from areas within the Commonwealth where maternal and infant outcomes are worse than the state average.
- This bill adds the following language to the Public Health Patients' and Residents' Rights statute: "Every patient or resident of a facility shall have the right to have their birth doula's continuous presence during labor and delivery. Facilities shall not place an undue burden on access of a patient's doula to clinical labor and delivery settings and shall not arbitrarily exclude a patient's doula from such settings. A doula shall not be counted as a patient's guest or support person."