

AtlantiCare

Policy & Procedure	<i>ID No.</i>	
<i>Subject:</i> Doula Support of the Pregnant and Postpartum Patient	<i>Category:</i>	Provision of Care
<i>Facility Scope:</i> AtlantiCare	<i>Department:</i>	Center for Childbirth

POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards and guidelines for a welcoming environment for the safe practice of a trained doula providing supportive care to the pregnant and postpartum patient.

The Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey, has enacted (S4119) which authorizes a patient to select a doula of the patient's choice to accompany the patient within the facility's premises for the purposes of providing support before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

A Doula means a *trained* professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to a mother before, during and after labor and childbirth, to help her achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

All trained Doulas shall adhere to all AtlantiCare policies, procedures and guidelines.

NOTE: AtlantiCare only verifies training/credentialing of Doulas that are employed by Atlanticare.

PROCEDURE:

The pregnant patient is permitted to have one doula during office visits, in labor and delivery triage, while in labor, during delivery, during their postpartum period, and in the NICU. This is in addition to the policy driven number of allowable support people at the time.

When a doula is present, the doula shall be identified to the registered nurse (RN) caring for the patient and the licensed practitioner [LP] (LP: MD, CNM, APN). The RN will document the name of the doula in the patient's EMR.

The doula will also display an identification tag or "Doula" sticker with their first name and patient initials. Should the doula leave the patient care area, they would be required to check back in with the unit upon return.

Doulas that are not AtlantiCare employees, will be restricted to the patients' rooms and will not use shared spaces such as employee lounges, breakrooms or other employee spaces.

Doulas may enter the patient care area whenever their patient needs them, at any time during their pregnancy, labor and delivery and or postpartum period. In the state of New Jersey Doulas are part of the healthcare team and can accompany the patient when they are in L&D Triage, in an LDR, OR, PACU, Maternity, NICU, MFM, and their provider's office(s).

The doula can perform any of the following services that they are trained to provide, including:

1. Provide support for the patient during office visits, Triage, LDR, Labor & Delivery, PACU, and during the postpartum period.
2. Assist the patient with breathing, relaxation, movement, positioning, and comfort care.
3. Assist with communication to the patient, the nurse, and medical caregivers.
4. Provide emotional reassurance and comfort to the patient and their family.
5. Support the patient's partner/support person(s) and encourage their participation in the birth experience at their own comfort level.
6. Assist the patient with breastfeeding, facilitate bonding, and/or help the patient become comfortable in their postpartum room.
7. If baby is in the NICU and mother is discharged, the Doula is encouraged to return to support mother and baby, however only 2 are permitted at one time in the NICU.

Effective: 3/26/2024	Reviewed:	Reviewed and Revised:	Review Cycle: Triennial
Owner: Director of Center for Childbirth	Source: See References		Authorized By: Department of OB/GYN; Women & Children's Service Line; Legal Department; Center For Childbirth Leadership
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The doula is not permitted to:

1. Perform any clinical or medical tasks.
2. Remove or adjust the fetal monitor from the patient unless approved by the RN or LP.
3. Give the patient anything to eat or drink without prior approval of the RN or LP.
4. Use any oils or substances without prior approval of the RN or LP.
5. Diagnose conditions or give medical advice.
6. Make decisions for the patient or pressure the patient into certain decisions.

REFERENCES:

New Jersey Department of Health EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE NO. 20-0201, Senate Bill No. 4119 (Amended 1/8/24). [4119 R2.PDF \(state.nj.us\)](#)

Rice-Simpson, K., Creehan, P.A., O'Brien-Abel, N., Roth, C., 7 Rohan, A. (2021). Perinatal Nursing. 5th Edition, Association of Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses.

DEFINITIONS:

AtlantiCare: AtlantiCare is defined as any and all affiliated companies of the AtlantiCare Health System, including its joint ventures operating under the AtlantiCare trademark, and captive professional services corporations such as AtlantiCare Physicians Group.

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