A doula is a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional, and informational support to women before, during, and shortly after childbirth to help them achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible.

**Doulas Improve:**
- Positive birth experience
- Breastfeeding initiation
- Newborn Apgar score

**Doulas Reduce:**
- Preterm birth rates
- Cesarean sections
- Birth complications

Black and Native American women are three to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women. Culturally competent doulas are able to provide support and care to improve birth outcomes for women of color.

**State Strategies to Provide Doula Services for Medicaid-covered Pregnant Women**

**Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant:**
The Indiana Safety PIN (Protecting Indiana’s Newborns) Program is a statewide infant mortality reduction program administered by the Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Division and supported by the state’s Title V MCH Services Block Grant. It supports community-based organizations, such as the Speak Life Doula Program, which provides doula services to pregnant women enrolled in Medicaid.

**Indiana Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs):**
- Medicaid-contracted MCOs have the option to cover doula services for all members or specific populations as a value-added service. For example, a Nebraska MCO covered doulas for pregnant women up to age 21 years who were engaged with the foster care system and lived in a group or maternity home, and had minimal parent support.

**Oregon’s Medicaid program has covered doula services as a preventive service since 2017. The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) covers two prenatal and two postpartum sessions and doula support during labor and delivery.

**Minnesota’s Medicaid program has covered doula services as an extended service for pregnant women since 2014. Up to seven sessions with a doula, which include prenatal and postpartum care and support during labor and delivery, are covered.

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