

**Medicaid Transformation Projects:
Comment on the proposal for Medicaid Reimbursement for Doula Care**

Greetings –

We'd like to comment on the proposal for Medicaid reimbursement for Doula care.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that breastfeeding is one of the most effective steps a mother can take to protect the health of her infant and herself. Infants who are not breastfed face an increased risk of type I and type II diabetes, obesity, asthma, infectious diseases, and rare events such as childhood leukemia and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Mothers who do not breastfeed face an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer. While over 80% of women participating in the Washington State WIC Nutrition Program initiate breastfeeding, close to 30% introduce infant formula by the second day of life. Access to doula care improves breastfeeding rates. Since Medicaid provides medical coverage for most women on WIC, reimbursing doulas as Community Health Workers or Community Health Representatives would have a positive impact on breastfeeding rates among women participating in WIC.

Thank you.

Jean O'Leary, MPH, RD
Washington State WIC Nutrition Program
Washington State Department of Health