

Hello Doula partner and welcome to TriHealth!

We are happy you're joining us to create a safe and healthy birthing experience for our patients. These guidelines will help you get to know our policies and practices, as well as what is expected of you and what you can expect from us when supporting your client at a TriHealth facility. Our goal is to create a friendly and collaborative environment for Doulas at TriHealth, as we recognize the value you bring to the prenatal, delivery, and postpartum phases of the perinatal journey. These guidelines include some legal language that is meant to offer clear direction for both you as the Doula and the TriHealth staff, and the legal statements are in *italics* so they are easily identifiable. Your acknowledgement of the guidelines is required so that you and the TriHealth care team are prepared to work together to support your client throughout their perinatal experience. Thank you for being here!

### **Definitions:**

**Doulas** are individuals chosen by the patient to provide emotional, physical, and informational support during pregnancy, the birthing process, and postpartum. The goal of a Doula is to support the patient through a positive and safe experience.

**Staff** are TriHealth employees that both provide and support patient care.

TriHealth identifies birthing persons as **patients**, and Doulas often identify them as **clients**. Both terms will be used interchangeably throughout this document and refer to the birthing person receiving care.

A **Doula friendly health system** is TriHealth's commitment to supporting the Doula's role. Doula-friendliness is grounded in policies and practices that reflect an understanding of the benefits of Doula care and actively create a space where patients, Doulas, and clinicians collaborate to help ensure the best outcomes and experience for the patient. As a Doula friendly health system, TriHealth commits to ensuring 1) staff knowledge of Doula support, 2) increasing awareness of Doulas among patients, and 3) implementing Doula friendly guidelines. TriHealth recognizes the advantages of Doula services and the positive impact they have on the patient's experience, and on maternal and infant outcomes.

### **Practices:**

As a Doula, you are not employed by TriHealth and you are not an independent contractor at TriHealth; you are solely here on behalf of your client. While you are not part of the medical team and do not perform clinical tasks, your presence and advocacy



are an important complement to the care your client receives from their healthcare providers.

To encourage a shared understanding of your role on the care team, the duties outlined below define how you will support your client while they are in our care at TriHealth. The staff are familiar with your duties and look forward to working together to support your client:

- **A Doula is encouraged to provide emotional, physical, and informational support:**
  - Doulas provide non-medical emotional comfort and physical support throughout pregnancy, labor, and the postpartum process.
  - Doulas support the patient's birth plan and help facilitate communication with TriHealth staff.
- **A Doula advocates for the patient:**
  - Doulas support the patient's preferences and needs, and help to ensure concerns are clearly communicated to the medical team.
  - Doulas help the patient understand their options so they can make informed decisions about their care.
  - Doulas support a calm, respectful, and personalized space that aligns with the patient's wishes and values.
- **A Doula can be present throughout the pregnancy, birth, and postpartum process:**
  - Doulas are allowed to accompany patients to prenatal appointments.
  - Doulas are allowed to remain with the patient from triage through postpartum discharge with the following additional considerations:
    - Doulas are welcome to support the patient during epidural placement.
    - Doulas are welcome in pre and post op whenever possible, though there may be times when space is limited to a single support person.
    - Only one support person can accompany the patient to the OR for a C-section due to infection prevention and safety concerns.
- **A Doula may not provide medical care or give medical advice, specifically:**
  - Doulas are not allowed to provide medical or clinical care [*which includes, but is not limited to, vaginal exams, blood pressure monitoring, fetal heart rate checks, rupturing membranes, external cephalic version (turning the baby), adjusting monitors, or administering any medications (herbal or otherwise)*].
  - Doulas are not allowed to give medical advice or second opinions.

- Doulas are not allowed to speak on behalf of or make decisions for the patient.
- Doulas are not allowed to interfere with medical treatment plans or any emergency interventions.
- Doulas are not allowed to disclose patient information unless the patient has given consent.
- Doulas are not allowed to recruit or solicit patients while on TriHealth property.

We welcome your continuous support throughout your client's time at TriHealth. Because you are not employed or contracted by TriHealth, you will be considered a visitor, but with two special exceptions:

- Doulas will not be counted towards the patient's allotted visitor count even if visitor restrictions are implemented.
- Doulas are not required to abide by posted visitor hours. *Except as otherwise stated, Doulas must abide by all other TriHealth visitor policies and guidelines.*

Your acknowledgement and signature are required at the first TriHealth facility visit for each patient you support. You will be provided with a copy of the signature page for your records, and a copy will be uploaded in the patient's chart. In addition to these guidelines, you agree to abide by all TriHealth policies and applicable laws, which can be found at [TriHealth.com](http://TriHealth.com). *Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, TriHealth is not liable for any action or inaction taken by any Doula. No Doula is paid by TriHealth. TriHealth shall not bill for any Doula services, nor will the Doula bill or invoice TriHealth.*

**Procedures:** As a Doula, you will work alongside TriHealth staff throughout your client's pregnancy, birth, and recovery to support a healthy and safe experience. The procedures below outline what you can expect from the staff and what is expected of you during a Doula-attended pregnancy in both the outpatient and inpatient settings.

Outpatient setting:

1. Doulas must identify themselves to the patient's health care team upon arrival.
2. Doulas will wait with their client in the waiting area until they are called back for their appointment.
3. The front desk staff will also notify the patient's clinical care team prior to rooming that the patient is accompanied by Doula.
4. The Doula and staff will work together throughout the encounter to foster a collaborative relationship in support of the patient and their family.



5. The staff will document that a Doula is accompanying the patient in Epic, including the Doula's name and agency (if applicable).
6. The staff will provide the patient with documentation to confirm they are working with a Doula, at the patient's request. The staff will follow existing office guidelines for completion of this paperwork.
7. The staff will review the expectations of the Doula's role (as defined in the "practices" section of these guidelines) and provide the Doula with a copy of these guidelines for review and signature.
8. The staff will upload the signed signature page in the Epic media tab and provide a copy to the Doula.
9. The staff will remind the Doula to abide by all TriHealth policies and alert leadership if the Doula is witnessed failing to adhere to TriHealth policies and procedures.

Inpatient setting:

1. Doulas must identify themselves to the patient's health care team upon arrival to triage/labor and delivery, and again through any staffing shift changes.
2. The staff will ask the patient upon admission if a Doula will be present during their stay.
3. The Doula and staff will work together throughout the encounter to foster a collaborative relationship in support of the patient and their family.
4. The triage/labor and delivery staff will review the expectations of the Doula's role (as defined in the "practices" section of these guidelines) and provide the Doula with a copy of these guidelines for review and signature. The staff must request the Doula's signature on the last page of this document, and scan the document into the patient's medical record under the media tab. If the doula declines to sign the agreement, the staff will note the Doula's decision in the chart and notify the Doula they will be considered a regular visitor.
5. The staff will review expectations with patient, family, and the Doula on the labor and delivery process, operating room guidelines, and postpartum care.
6. The Doula and an RN/provider may have a conference with the patient and doula present, with additional conferences as needed throughout the patient's stay.
7. The staff will include the Doula's name on the patient's whiteboard.

8. The staff will document that a Doula is accompanying the patient in Epic, including the Doula's name and agency (if applicable).
9. The staff encourage the Doula's presence for continuous calming support (after privacy questions) in triage, birth, delivery and recovery as requested by the patient, *absent a compelling medical reason or TriHealth's sole discretion*.
10. The staff encourage the Doula to offer nonmedical comfort techniques for labor, including but not limited to, various position movements, such as ambulation outside of the bed (as allowed) breathing techniques, nonflammable aromatherapy, guided imagery, comforting touch, and use of positional support aids based on the patient's condition.
11. The staff will remind the Doula to abide by all TriHealth policies and alert leadership if the Doula is witnessed failing to adhere to TriHealth policies and procedures.

**Collaboration for Solutions:** To ensure a collaborative, healing environment is maintained for the patient, staff, and Doulas, a process to identify and address opportunities is outlined below:

1. An opportunity to improve the patient experience or quality of care is identified by the staff and/or Doula.
2. The opportunity is first discussed among the nurse, physician, and Doula caring for the patient. The patient may be involved in the discussion as appropriate.
3. The Charge nurse/manager is contacted to support discussions if the nurse, physician and Doula need additional assistance to identify a solution.
4. If behaviors escalate during discussions:
  - a. The charge nurse/manager will work in collaboration with the staff to determine whether the actions require a behavior contract for the Doula. If yes, the manager facilitates this discussion and signature by the Doula. TriHealth may also elect to file a formal grievance with the Doula's agency, if applicable.
  - b. If a Doula recognizes opportunities to improve the experience, please provide feedback at [doula@trihealth.com](mailto:doula@trihealth.com) to share the details of the situation. The email responses will be reviewed weekly by department and physician leadership with follow-up in a timely manner.
5. *Additional escalation methods in accordance with TriHealth visitor policies will be followed at TriHealth's discretion.*

Thank you for the role you play in our patient's birthing experience. The emotional support, education, and comfort you provide is a valued part of the patient care experience. We are proud to work together with you to deliver safe, high-quality care that results in a healthy pregnancy and birth!



## Attachment 1

*TriHealth Doula Agreement: I have read these guidelines or had them read to me. I understand the guidelines and have had any questions fully answered. I agree to abide by these guidelines and all applicable TriHealth policies and laws not explicitly outlined in this policy. Further, I voluntarily assume the risk of any injury, loss, and/or adverse health consequence to myself that may occur because of my services as a Doula.*

Doula name (and agency if applicable):

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Date:

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SCAN INTO CHART



Last updated: 12/5/2025

