

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: H2/13/25 S4/3/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1252

By: Representative L. Johnson

By: Senator Irvin

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE CERTIFIED COMMUNITY-BASED DOULA CERTIFICATION ACT; TO CERTIFY BIRTH AND POSTPARTUM DOULAS IN THIS STATE TO IMPROVE MATERNAL AND INFANT OUTCOMES; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO ESTABLISH THE CERTIFIED COMMUNITY-BASED DOULA CERTIFICATION ACT; AND TO CERTIFY BIRTH AND POSTPARTUM DOULAS IN THIS STATE TO IMPROVE MATERNAL AND INFANT OUTCOMES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 17, is amended to add an additional chapter to read as follows:

CHAPTER 108

CERTIFIED COMMUNITY-BASED DOULA CERTIFICATION ACT

Subchapter 1 - General Provisions

17-108-101. Title.

This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Certified Community-Based Doula Certification Act".

17-108-102. Definitions.



As used in this chapter:

(1) "Certified community-based doula" means an individual who is a trained professional and provides nonclinical emotional, physical, and informational support to women, before and during pregnancy and continuing through the postpartum period; and

(2) "Health benefit plan" means an individual, blanket, or group plan, policy, or contract for healthcare services issued or delivered in this state by a healthcare insurer, health maintenance organization, hospital medical service corporation, or self-insured governmental or church plan in this state.

Subchapter 2 - Certification

17-108-201. Certified community-based doula – Certification.

(a) The Department of Health shall issue a certification to be a certified community-based doula to an individual who:

(1) Is eighteen (18) years of age or older;

(2) Submits evidence of:

(A) Maintaining a certification from a doula certification organization designated by the department under § 17-108-203; or

(B) Holding a certificate as a doula by the Doula Alliance of Arkansas; and

(3) Submits an application with an application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00).

(b)(1) A certification under this section is valid for two (2) years after the date of issuance.

(2) To renew a certification, a doula shall:

(A)(i) Complete ten (10) hours of professional development requirements and training over two (2) years.

(ii) The department, in conjunction with the Doula Alliance of Arkansas, may adopt rules relating to the tracking by the department of professional development and training; and

(B) Submit a renewal application with a renewal application fee as determined by the department.

(c) The department shall create and maintain a registry of certified community-based doulas to be made available to the public.

17-108-202. Suspension, revocation, nonissuance, or nonrenewal.

(a) The Department of Health may suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue or renew the certification of a certified community-based doula for:

(1) Securing a certification under this chapter through fraud or deceit;

(2) Unethical conduct, gross ignorance, or inefficiency in the conduct of his or her practice;

(3) Using a false name or an alias in his or her practice;

(4) Violating any provision of this chapter; or

(5) Failing to comply with any of the requirements for issuance of the certification.

(b) Proceedings under this section shall comply with the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

17-108-203. Designated doula certification organizations.

(a) The Department of Health, in conjunction with the Doula Alliance of Arkansas, shall establish criteria for an organization to be designated as a doula certification organization.

(b)(1) The department, in conjunction with the Doula Alliance of Arkansas, shall periodically review the doula certification organizations designated by the department.

(2) The department, in conjunction with the Doula Alliance of Arkansas, may:

(A) Designate additional organizations as doula certification organizations for the purpose of certifying doulas for inclusion on the registry of certified community-based doulas; and

(B)(i) Remove the designation of a doula certification organization previously designated.

(ii) If the department removes a designation, the department shall provide notice of the removal by publication on the department's website and specify the date after which a certification by the doula certification organization no longer authorizes a doula certified by the doula certification organization to be included on the certified community-based doula registry.

(c)(1) A doula certification organization seeking designation under this section shall provide the department with evidence that the doula

certification organization satisfies designation criteria established by the department.

(2) If the department designates a doula certification organization under this section, the department shall provide notice of the designation by publication on the department's website for the certified community-based doula registry and specify the date after which a certification by the doula certification organization authorizes a doula certified by the organization to be included on the certified community-based doula registry.

(d) This section does not prohibit an individual from submitting his or her doula certification to the department without involvement of a doula certification organization.

Subchapter 3 - Miscellaneous Provisions

17-108-301. Scope of practice.

A certified community-based doula under this chapter shall perform only the following types of services:

- (1) Providing childbirth education;
- (2) Helping pregnant women navigate the healthcare system;
- (3) Advocating for pregnant women before, during, and after the birth of a child;
- (4) Connecting pregnant women with community resources; and
- (5) Supporting pregnant women with continuous emotional and physical support throughout labor and birth and intermittently during the prenatal and postpartum periods.

17-108-302. Patient and personal data and information.

(a) Patient and personal data and information accessed or attained by a certified community-based doula under this chapter is exempt from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., and is confidential and privileged as otherwise required by federal law.

(b) If a certified community-based doula under this chapter does not maintain the confidential and privileged nature of the patient data or information, the doula shall be subject to any penalty under state and federal law for a breach of confidential patient data or information.

17-108-303. Certified community-based doula compensation.

(a) A certified community-based doula under this chapter shall receive compensation for services provided from:

(1) The Arkansas Medicaid Program; and

(2) A health benefit plan.

(b) Services described in subsection (a) of this section shall include support during a hospital delivery and during the prenatal and postpartum periods as defined through rules established by the Department of Human Services.

17-108-304. Rules.

(a) The Department of Health may promulgate rules relating to the certification and regulation of certified community-based doulas under this subchapter and relating to the designation of an organization as a doula certification organization.

(b) On or before December 31, 2025, the Department of Human Services shall promulgate rules relating to the reimbursement of doulas under the Arkansas Medicaid Program.

/s/L. Johnson