

At Enloe Medical Center, we are excited to offer volunteer doulas to assist in your childbirth experience. Doulas are women who are specially trained to provide non-medical physical and emotional support during childbirth.

The word doula is a Greek word than means “women’s servant.” For centuries women have given the ultimate service to other women by attending to them during labor and childbirth.

Research shows that when doulas are part of the childbirth experience, there is a decrease in the rate of cesarean sections, length of labor and need for medical intervention. Doulas do this by providing continuous physical and emotional support. They do not provide medical intervention, nor do they make medical decisions.

Many interested members of our community share our passion for helping you have the best birth experience possible. The volunteer doulas at Enloe Medical Center have received specialized training in labor support and make themselves available to you during your labor and immediate postpartum period at no cost.

If you think that having a doula during your labor would help you have the experience you have dreamed about, please ask your nurse if one is available.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Do I need a doula? I thought that was what my nurse did?**

The nurse caring for you has specialized training in labor support just as a doula does. Nurses treasure this part of their role and would love to stay by your side throughout your labor. However, because that isn’t always possible, a doula is a perfect addition to your healthcare team. Your doula, nurse, and midwife or physician will work together to help provide the safest, most rewarding birth experience possible.

### **What if I already have a support person?**

Doulas do not take the place of support people you already may have. They are there to support them in their role and to compliment and enhance their experience as well as yours. Doulas can encourage your support person in the use of comfort measures and step in when he or she needs a break.

### **What if I want pain medication or an epidural?**

The purpose of a doula is to help you have a memorable and satisfying birth experience. Doulas provide emotional support whether or not you use medication or an epidural. Doulas can help support you during any times when medication may not be providing pain relief. Your doula can also assist you in changing your position to facilitate birth, even with an epidural. During times of comfort and

rest for you, she can also help you to journal your experience so you or your partner does not have to worry about the work of capturing details. Additionally, she can provide for breaks for your support people who may find the time after an epidural a good time to get some nourishment or rest so they are prepared to assist you once you have delivered.

### **What if I need to have a cesarean section?**

If you have a support person with you, he or she will be encouraged to go in to the delivery room with you, unless you will be receiving general anesthesia. If you will be having spinal or epidural anesthesia and your support person chooses not to go in with you, or is unable to go in with you, you may opt to have your doula present with you. In either case, your doula may stay and assist you immediately after recovery if you wish, or she may say goodbye to you when you go into the delivery room if that is what you desire, that choice will be yours.

### **Are doula’s available at all times?**

No. Because this is a growing volunteer program, there may be times when a doula is not available. Our goal is to have someone available at all times but we cannot guarantee availability. Your nurse will work with you to provide you with the best experience possible with or without a doula present.