

BIRTHWELL PARTNERS

COMMUNITY DOULA PROJECT

Mission

BirthWell Partners is a 501(c)3 non-profit that makes doula training and doula services more equitable and accessible, in order to improve the health of families and communities in Alabama.

What is a Doula?

A person trained to provide informational, physical and emotional support to pregnant people before, during and after childbirth.

What is a Doula?

Doulas are **NOT** Midwives and they do **NOT** do anything medical

BUT

A doula's presence affects medical outcomes

Fewer Low Birthweight Babies	Fewer Preterm Births	Fewer C-Sections/More Spontaneous Vaginal Births	Higher APGAR Scores	Increased Rates of Breastfeeding Initiation and Duration

Doulas Support ALL Births

- Medicated births
- Unmedicated births
- Vaginal births
- C- sections
- If you have a partner
- If this is your 1st or 4th baby
- Hospital births



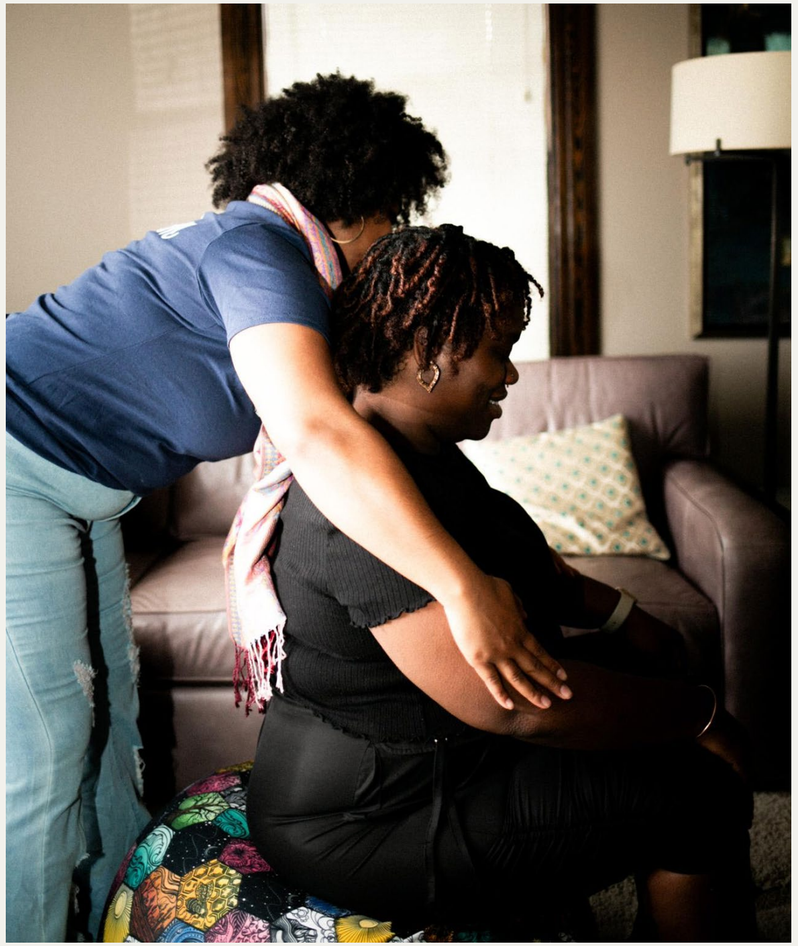
How Doulas Show Up Prenatally

- Get to know client and their needs
- Share information and resources
- Refer clients to other services/support
- Help clients understand options
- Support client in clarifying and communicating preferences



How Doulas Show Up Prenatally

- Help clients understand their rights
- Explain key concepts related to person-centered care: informed consent and refusal, evidence-based care, self-advocacy
- Help clients and their family support prepare mentally and physically for birth and early weeks of parenting



How Doulas Show Up During Labor

- Bring a calming presence
- Stay with client continuously during labor from the time they request support
- Help client change positions
- Utilize comfort measures as needed
- Provide informational and decision - making support



Doula Support Immediately Postpartum

- Support skin to skin contact
- Assist with breastfeeding initiation
- Document family's first moments together
- Make sure mom drinks and eats
- Debriefs/answers questions
- An additional person supporting the client during recovery



Doula Support During Early Weeks Postpartum

- Checks on client to see how they are doing mentally and physically
- Provide information about newborn care, infant sleep, infant feeding
- Assist with light household tasks
- Listen and provide emotional support
- Make appropriate referrals



Doulas Make a Difference!

Doula support has been shown to:

- Decrease rates of cesarean birth
- Decrease rates of preterm birth
- Decrease rate of low birthweight
- Increase rates of satisfaction with birth experience
- Increase breastfeeding rates



BirthWell Partners Services



Doula Training

- Trained over 500 doula since founding
- Host multiple DONA approved doula trainings a year
- Work-Study program removes financial barrier to becoming a doula

A Snapshot View of BirthWell Partners Doulas

Work - Study

- Trained by BWP
- Commit to 2-3 births

Volunteer

- Trained by BWP or another organization
- Typically attend 1-3 births

Contract

- Trained by BWP or another organization
- Previous experience as Volunteer or Work-Study doula



- Diverse races, ages, personalities
- Includes Certified Recovery Support Specialist (CRSS) doulas

Doula Services

- BirthWell Doulas provide **FREE** and **REDUCED-COST** services to those who need it most in AL
- Services are free if on Medicaid
  - *Medicaid does not yet cover services, we use it to determine income eligibility*
- Services include 2 prenatal visits, continuous in-hospital labor support, and 1-2 postpartum visits









Doula Services

- In March 2026, we launched our **Postpartum Doula Services Program**

- Families can receive up to **4 hours of FREE** postpartum doula support

- Open to families who are working with BWP for birth doula support AND families who are not



Childbirth Classes



- **What's on the Menu?**
  - July 23rd
  - October 6th
- **Easy Breezy Labor**
  - August 8th
  - November 14th
- **Feed That Baby!**
  - December 5th

Registration Required. Sign up on our website!

Online Postpartum Support Group

- Our postpartum support group offers a safe, welcoming space where you can connect with other new parents who understand what you're going through.
- Free, monthly group
- Open to anyone

Registration Required. Sign up on our website!



Who We Serve

- 100% low-income/94% on Medicaid
- 60-70% people of color
- 70% single parents
- 10% teens
- 13% in recovery from substance use disorder

"Not only having somebody with both the knowledge and presence that I feel only a doula can really have is important, but the program also being made accessible to low-income birthing folks is even more important and I just want to say that I'm really grateful that Birthwell Partners delivered both quality and accessibility, which is not always easy to find"

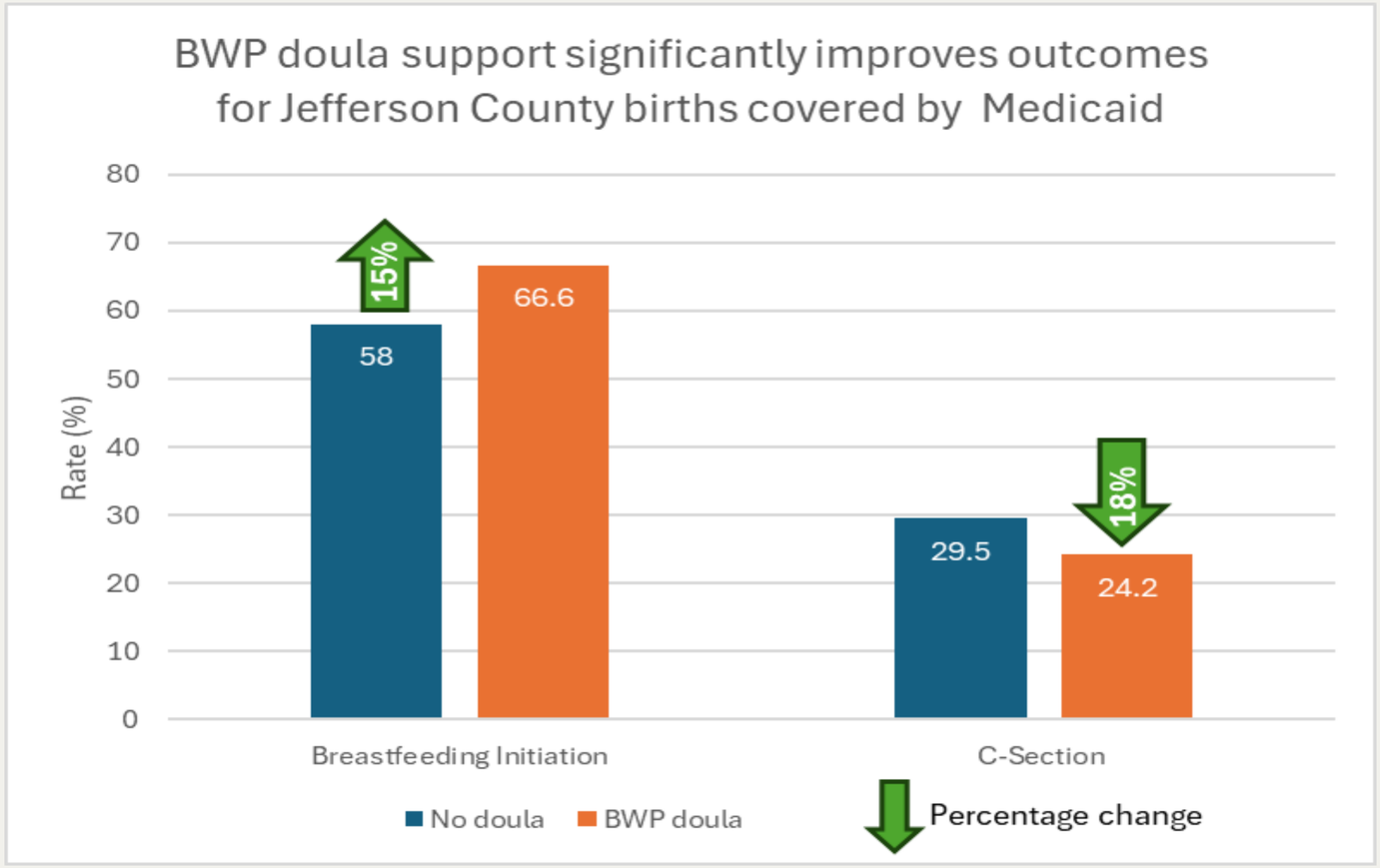
Where We Serve

- Based in Birmingham, so a majority of services take place in the GBA

- In recent years, we have expanded to serve more areas of the state, especially rural hospitals, and can serve people giving birth in **Tuscaloosa, Jasper, Anniston, Montgomery, Huntsville or Florence area hospitals.**

Services are subject to doula availability and funding

“Leveling the start: cost - effectiveness of community - based doula care among Medicaid births ”



WHAT THIS STUDY DID

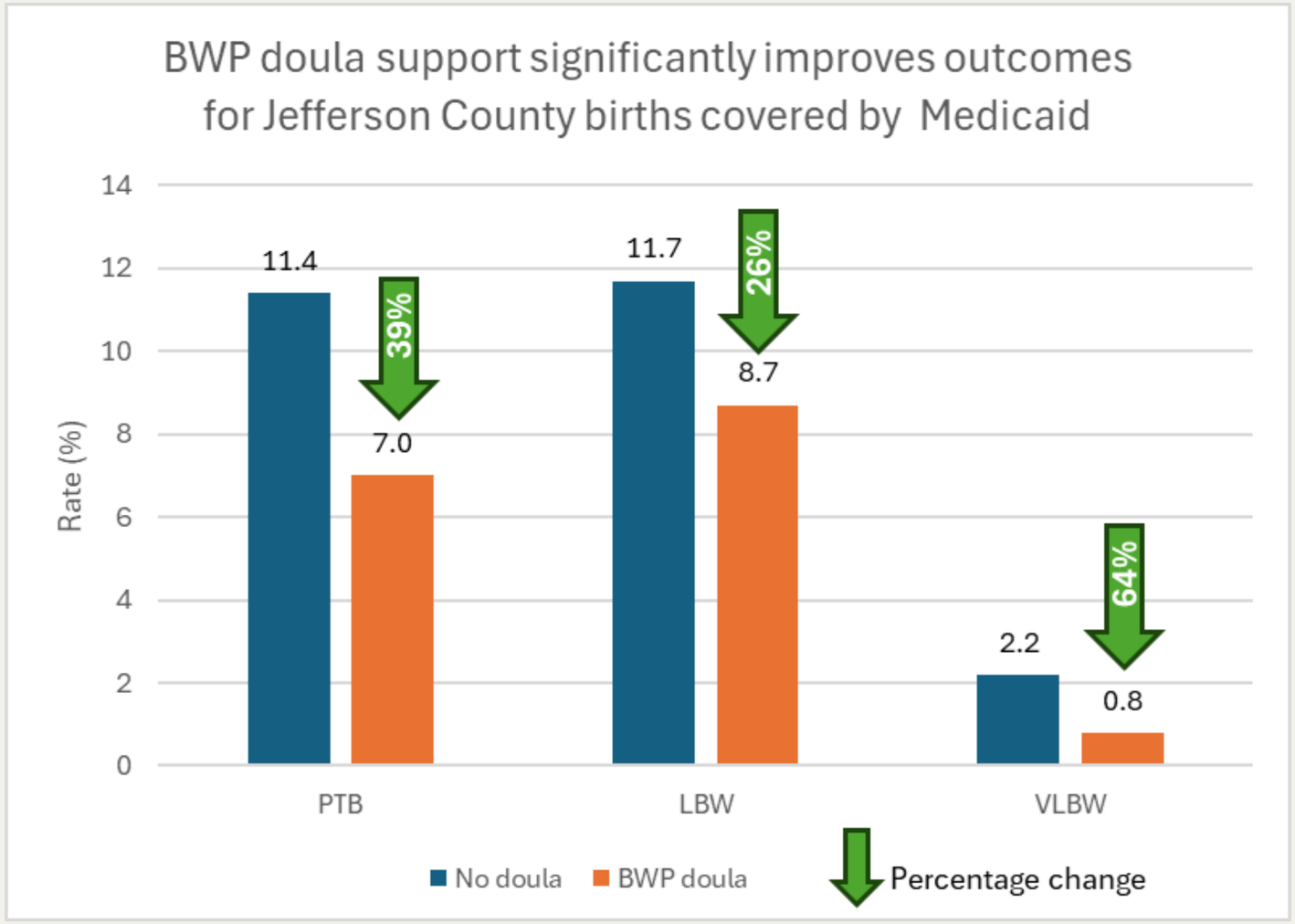
Analyzed 42,000+ Medicaid births in Jefferson Co., AL (2012 –2023)

Compared outcomes for families w/ and w/out doula support (BirthWell Partners)

Calculated impact on outcomes

Estimated cost savings: reduction of PTB rate

“Leveling the start: cost - effectiveness of community - based doula care among Medicaid births”



Source: Malak, N. Leveling the start: cost-effectiveness of community-based doula care among Medicaid births. BMC Public Health (2026). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-026-27003-1

Partnerships and Collaborations

Cahaba Medical Care

my care alabama

Nurse-Family Partnership
Helping First-Time Parents Succeed

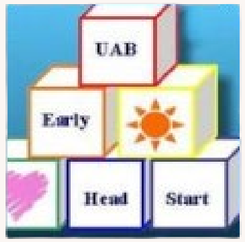
From Day One
Quality Care from the Start

Aletheia House

Olivia's House

The Lovelady Center
restoring hope

Elmore County
family resource center
Connecting Resources and Families





AND

Care Provider Referrals

Health Fairs & Events

Word of Mouth

Internet

Partnerships to Increase Access to Doula Services

ADMH
Alabama Department of Mental Health

Alabama Perinatal Quality Collaborative
ALPQC

Women's Foundation of Alabama

BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Walker Area Community Foundation
Responsible Giving Results

Our Community Foundation
For a Greater Birmingham

Alabama Power Foundation

The Daniel Foundation of Alabama

Building Healthy Families – One Birth at a Time!

Eligibility & How to Refer

Eligibility

- If clients are on Medicaid, doula services are free
  - *Medicaid does not pay for doula care in Alabama. We use Medicaid eligibility as a guide to determine financial need.*
- If not on Medicaid, we offer a sliding scale based on income

Referrals

- If someone is interested, encourage the client to visit our website to learn more about doula support or provide them with a flyer
- To sign up for a doula, they can complete the lead form on our website

Thank You!
Any Questions?

Contact Information

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BirthWell Partners Community Doula Project