

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Department of Health Care Finance**



Office of the Senior Deputy Director and Medicaid Director

**MDL # 23-02**

**MEDICAID DIRECTOR LETTER**

**TO:** All Interested Parties

**DATE:** May 09, 2023

**SUBJECT:** **Announcement of Maternal Health Advisory Group Recommission**

---

**Purpose**

This Medicaid Director Letter announces that DHCF will reconvene the Maternal Health Advisory Group on Monday, June 12, 2023, at 3:30 pm. The meeting will update the Advisory Group on maternal health services and discuss how to best outreach, recruit and enroll doulas into the Medicaid program. Special guest Natasha Turner, Doula Program Analyst from the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, will share best practices from Virginia in their state's recruiting efforts of doulas as Medicaid providers. In addition, DHCF staff will give an update on the agency's plans for the Maternal Health Advisory Group in FY2024.

**Background of the Maternal Health Advisory Group**

In the Budget Support Act of 2022 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the DC Council and Congress made several changes to maternal health services that affect DHCF's health insurance programs, including:

- Adding in doula services as a covered benefit of DHCF health insurance programs, to be authorized for Medicaid coverage through a State Plan Amendment (SPA)
- Extending the length of eligibility postpartum from 60 days to 365 days
- Requiring coverage of Non-Emergency Transportation to and from maternal appointments through the Alliance program

DHCF convened an 18-member Maternal Health Advisory Group composed of stakeholders with experience in maternal health, to inform the expansion of coverage and maternal health services. The Advisory Group met between January and July 2022 to take public input on the service array, financial impact, and coverage needed to improve maternal health access and achieve more equitable maternal health outcomes through DHCF programs.

**Maternal Health Advisory Group Accomplishments:** The Advisory Group advised on training, public outreach, program support, and other items related to implementation of new maternal health coverage and benefits. While the Advisory Group did not issue formal recommendations as a body, input from group members and discussion at meetings shaped the Doula Services State Plan Amendment and related guidance in several ways. For example, the District's decision to reimburse differently for perinatal and postpartum doula visits came from input from the Maternal Health Advisory Group. In addition, input from the

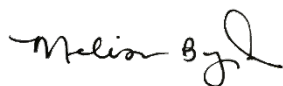
Maternal Health Advisory Group helped determine the total number of doula visits that DHCF would reimburse.

DHCF drafted, submitted, and received CMS approval for the two SPAs and has implemented the provision for non-emergency transportation. Having completed the three primary objectives, DHCF has not convened the Advisory Group after July 2022.

**DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group Recommissioned:** After expressed public interest, DHCF is recommissioning the Maternal Health Advisory Group. *The Advisory Group will meet virtually, June 12, 2023, at 3:30 pm.* The Group will receive an update on the status of the maternal health projects. In addition, DHCF will solicit input from the group regarding public outreach and recruitment of doulas as Medicaid providers and detail Medicaid renewal efforts. The meeting is open to the public and is available at: <https://dcnet.webex.com/dcnet/j.php?MTID=m886e3ebef5f530fb9f4d1e2d0609fa05>

**Comments and Contact:** Those interested in receiving notice of future meetings and policy action from DHCF or remove themselves from being contacted are encouraged to email [dashawn.groves@dc.gov](mailto:dashawn.groves@dc.gov) stating a wish to enroll or disenroll from the mailing list.

Sincerely,



Melisa Byrd  
Senior Deputy Director and Medicaid Director

**Cc:** DC Behavioral Health Association  
DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers  
DC Health Care Association  
DC Home Health Association  
DC Hospital Association  
DC Primary Care Association  
Medical Society of the District of Columbia