

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



**Office of the Senior Deputy Director/Medicaid Director**  
**Medicaid Director Letter # 21-07**

To: All Interested Parties

From: Melisa Byrd, Medicaid Director and Senior Deputy Director

DATE: December 17, 2021

SUBJECT: Maternal Health Advisory Group and Related Stakeholder Outreach

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**Purpose:** This Medicaid Director Letter describes the upcoming expansion of maternal health services and eligibility in DHCF programs, serves as the announcement for the stakeholder engagement and agency action on maternal health, sets the scope, structure, and application process for the DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group, and directs stakeholders to ways to contact and submit comments to the agency on ways to improve maternal services and coverage in advance of upcoming meetings.

**Maternal Health Service Changes:** 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. In the next fiscal year, DHCF agency action on maternal health will include:

1. 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)
2. Extending the length of eligibility postpartum from 60 days to 365 days
3. Requiring coverage of Non-Emergency Transportation to and from maternal appointments through the Alliance program

DHCF is looking for stakeholder input to inform the expansion of coverage and maternal health services. The agency is specifically looking to consult with stakeholders on the following items related to doula services:

- i. Setting competitive reimbursement rates;
- ii. Setting a reasonable number of doula visits to be reimbursed during the course of the pregnancy and postpartum period;
- iii. Developing program support and training for doula service providers to facilitate billing; and
- iv. Assessing the viability of incentive payments to doulas whose clients attend postpartum appointments with a medical provider.

The agency is also looking for input on the following:

- i. Use of maternal care with a focus on postpartum care: patterns, predictors, and barriers
- ii. Designing outreach to beneficiaries and providers on postpartum services now that DHCF health programs will provide 365 days coverage postpartum
- iii. Designing outreach and training on maternal health services available through DHCF programs
- iv. Other aspects of maternal health in DHCF programs

**Description of Stakeholder Outreach:** DHCF intends to collect stakeholder outreach on maternal health projects through public comment at the Medicaid Maternal Health Kickoff Meeting, verbal feedback at Advisory Group meetings, and written comments collected by email.

*Medicaid Maternal Health Kickoff Meeting*

The December 14<sup>th</sup> Medicaid Maternal Health Kickoff Meeting shared expected agency action on maternal health projects over the next fiscal year, described the draft structure and application process for the Maternal Health Advisory Group and its work, and afforded the public an opportunity to comment on the agency’s direction on maternal health. Stakeholders may provide written comments to [dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov](mailto:dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov) if they were unable to attend this meeting and future Advisory Group meetings. For more information on the Kickoff Meeting, please find the public notice [here](#).

**DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group:** Starting in January 2022, the DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group will advise the Department of Health Care Finance on its expansion of maternal services and expanded coverage in FY22. The Advisory Group will meet between January 2022 and the end of the fiscal year 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. The Advisory Group will advise on training, public outreach, program support, and other items related to implementation of new maternal health coverage and benefits.

*Composition of Maternal Health Advisory Group:* DHCF has written the following guidelines to govern the Maternal Health Advisory Group’s composition, and interested individuals are encouraged to familiarize themselves with them in advance of applying.

1. The Maternal Health Advisory Group (“Group”) shall consist of no more than eighteen (18) members.
2. The State Medicaid Director/Senior Deputy Director of the Department of Health Care Finance and the Director of DC Health or their designees shall serve as members of the Group.
3. At least four members shall be classified as doulas or doula organizations, including but not limited to the following entities:
  - i. Doulas who practice in the District of Columbia or surrounding region. These doulas may include the following:
    1. Labor and birth doulas
    2. Antepartum doulas
    3. Postpartum doulas
    4. Doulas that specialize in bereavement and stillbirth
  - ii. Provider associations representing doulas or community birth workers
4. At least four members shall be beneficiaries or beneficiary advocates and meet at least one of the following standards:
  - a. Those who have used doula services in the District;
  - b. Those who have used maternal health services in the District; and
  - c. Beneficiaries and beneficiary advocates informed about maternal health in the District.
5. At least four members shall be classified as health care medical providers, behavioral health providers, or representatives of provider organizations who possess strong knowledge of maternal medical or behavioral health services and are familiar with doula services.
  - a. Provider types may include but are not limited to:
    - i. OB/GYNs;
    - ii. Midwives;
    - iii. Lactation consultants; and
    - iv. Primary care providers.
  - b. Provider organizations may include but are not limited to the following entities:
    - i. Hospitals;

- ii. Birthing Centers;
  - iii. Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC);
  - iv. Primary Care Facilities;
  - v. Behavioral health providers; and
  - vi. Provider organizations with expertise in maternal health care.
6. Four members shall represent Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO), including representation from each MCO contracted with DHCF.

*Applications to the DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group:* Applicants to the DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group will be selected on their knowledge of the District's health system, ability to fairly represent organizations or people in a similar position, knowledge of maternal health, ability to be a regular participant, and their ability to fit the criteria listed above. Applications should be filled out at this [link](#) and you may contact [dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov](mailto:dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov) if you have any technical difficulties. Applicants will be notified whether they were selected via email.

*DHCF Maternal Health Advisory Group Meetings and Expectations:* All Advisory Group meetings will be open to the public. Advisory Group members may consult on meeting agendas, will be given preference to speak in certain segments of the call. Members of the Advisory Group will be expected to attend monthly virtual public meetings, potential Subcommittee work, and preparation for meetings January-April 2022. Members should anticipate that a majority of the work will be completed by April 2022 but some may continue afterward.

**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 [dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov](mailto:dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov) stating a wish to enroll or disenroll from the mailing list.

*Comments:* Those who want to comment on Maternal Health Projects outside of the Kickoff Meeting and DHCF Maternal Health Advisory group are encouraged to submit written comments to [dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov](mailto:dhcf.maternalhealth@dc.gov). The comments will be distributed and reviewed by agency staff developing the SPA and Rules related to maternal health and passed to the Advisory Group.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_  
Melisa Byrd, Senior Deputy Director and State Medicaid Director

Date: December 17, 2021