

Western Sky Community Care is Raising Awareness about the Importance of Doula Care for New and Expectant Mothers -
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For International Doula Month in May, Western Sky is educating New Mexico residents on doula care

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., May 22, 2023 [PRNewswire/](#) -- The month of May marks International Doula Month, an annual observance celebrating doulas and raising awareness of the important work they do for new and expectant mothers before, during and after pregnancy. Doulas are non-clinical, trained healthcare workers who support pregnant women and their partners during their pregnancy experience. This month, Western Sky is raising awareness of doulas in their communities as well as the importance of maternal health.

According to the [World Health Organization](#), maternal mortality rates in the United States increased by 75% over the past 20 years – the highest rate in the developed world. Furthermore, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), the number of women who died of maternal causes in the United States rose to 1,205 in 2021 – representing a sharp increase from previous years. That means the U.S. maternal death rate for 2021 was 32.9 deaths per 100,000 live births. The new report also notes significant racial disparities in the nation's maternal death rate. In 2021, the rate for black women was 69.9 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is 2.6 times the rate for white women.

There are many factors that contribute to maternal health disparities, such as variations in quality healthcare, underlying chronic conditions, structural racism, and implicit bias. One effective solution to address increasing maternal mortality rates is doula services.

[Research](#) shows that people who work with a doula throughout the prenatal period and during childbirth are less likely to have a preterm delivery or a low birthweight baby, less likely to experience postpartum depression, and more likely to initiate and continue breastfeeding for a longer period. Doula care has also been shown to [lower costs](#) by reducing the need for medical interventions including cesareans, instrument assisted births, and pain medication.

"Having a doula during pregnancy and during delivery can provide important physical and emotional support for mothers in one of the most vulnerable times in their lives," said Dr. Susan Lewis, Western Sky Community Care Chief Medical Director. "Doulas serve as an advocate and resource that can help alleviate the stress associated with pregnancy and ensure pregnant people are getting the care they need and deserve."

Western Sky Community Care recognizes the need for well-rounded maternal care and the importance of doula care and has partnered with Pacify to offer virtual doula services for its members, helping new and expectant mothers address potential risk factors and prepare for motherhood. The Western Sky doula network provides members with 24/7, video-enabled support. The Pacify app connects families to a nationwide network of doulas who can answer members' questions, help develop a birth plan, prepare the birth partner, and provide other non-clinical perinatal care. Pacify also provides 24/7 lactation and infant feeding support. Western Sky members can download the Pacify app to video chat with maternal and pediatric health experts through a secure platform available any time, day or night.

For more information about Western Sky Community Care and its doula benefits for members, visit https://www.westernskycommunitycare.com/newsroom/New_Doula_Network.html.

About Western Sky Community Care

Established to deliver quality healthcare in the state of New Mexico through local, regional, and community-based resources, Western Sky Community Care is a Managed Care Organization and subsidiary of Centene Corporation. Western Sky Community Care exists to improve the health of its beneficiaries through focused, compassionate, and coordinated care. Our approach is based on the core belief that quality healthcare is best delivered locally. For more information, visit www.westernskycommunitycare.com.

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