

15 YEARS OF COMMUNITY-BASED DOULA

HealthConnect One's community-based doula model is an evidence based approach to supporting new families, particularly in underserved communities. The time immediately surrounding labor and delivery is a critical period in the development of a young family. Women in difficult circumstances (adolescents, women with language barriers, women in low-income communities) are particularly vulnerable during this period, but may also be open during this time to interventions which support their new roles and competencies. Programs which use doulas for support in childbirth have demonstrated fewer labor and delivery complications, fewer medical interventions, and increased well-being for both mothers and babies. Mothers who receive emotional and educational support during pregnancy, labor, delivery and the early postpartum period are more knowledgeable and confident, and are better able to bond with and care for their children.

As a result of tireless advocacy by HC One's Community-Based Doula Network and other maternal and child health stakeholders around the country, the first federal funding stream for community-based doula programs was developed in 2008. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) named HealthConnect One the Community-Based Doula Leadership Institute to provide training, technical assistance, and cross-site evaluation to a cohort of six HRSA-funded community-based doula programs across the country.

The Community-Based Doula Leadership Institute:

- 1) Offers outreach, training, program development, intensive support, technical assistance, and guidance to urban and rural Community-based Doula programs funded by HRSA;
- 2) Assures program quality through fidelity to the model through cross-sited evaluation and developing an accreditation process;
- 3) Promotes community-based doula model as a successful evidence-based intervention through increasing linkages to systems across the country.

Community-Based Doula work leads to:

- Tremendous Cost Savings: *\$7,439 per Cesarean section averted; \$1,000 per epidural averted; \$115,000 per premature birth averted*
- Lower C-Section rates: *C-section rates were 8% for single births (compared to 14.5% for US teens and 12.8% for Chicago teens)**
- Lower Epidural Rates: *11.4% (compared to a conservative estimate of 50% nationwide)**
- Higher Breastfeeding Rates: *80% (compared to 47.3% for US teens, and 42% for all Illinois women)**

*2001 Pilot Data

HC One Community-Based Doula History

1996: HC One conducted a four-year community-based doula pilot in Chicago with a cohort of low-income teen mothers.

1996-2006: HC One develops 22 community-based doula replication sites across the state of Illinois, and in 14 other states.

2004: HC One develops and mobilizes the Community-Based Doula Advocacy Network, a vibrant Network currently over 400 members strong.

2006: HC One begins development of *Doula Data* – a web-based data collection tool for HC One replication sites.

2008: HC One was named the Community-Based Doula Leadership Institute by HRSA.

2008: HC One forms the Community-Based Doula Leadership Institute Advisory Board.

2010 - 2013: HC One was renewed as HRSA's Community-Based Leadership Institute.

2011: HC One supports 43 sites in 15 states, with nearly 37 communities in various stages of preparation or replication.