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For immediate release

New Support for Pregnant Families Available Free and Very-Low-Cost Options for All Expectant Parents in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties

Up to 100 families will have access to very-low-cost support before, during and after birth thanks to a new doula care program in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties. These new services are available in addition to the ongoing doula care services delivered free of charge to Medicaid-eligible families.

The services are provided by the Community Doula Program (CDP), a non-profit organization in partnership with InterCommunity Health Network Coordinated Care Organization to provide culturally, socially, and linguistically matched doula care to Medicaid-eligible families in Oregon.

Doulas are trusted, non-medical professionals who provide respectful physical, emotional, and information support during birth, pregnancy, and early parenting. Doulas work with families and the families' doctor or midwife to navigate care during birth and after the baby is born. Research shows that people with doulas have shorter labors with fewer complications, reach their infant feeding goals more easily, have fewer cesarean births, and describe more positive feelings about their birth.

Although the care of a CDP doula is typically only available to Medicaid-eligible families, CDP will be offering the care of the new doulas to up to 100 interested families, regardless of insurance status. The only cost to the expectant parent for care is an administrative fee of \$150. (Sliding scale available.)

The care is available thanks to an influx of new doulas to the program, all of whom have received training that exceeds Oregon State requirements. Before a doula can work with a Medicaid-eligible family, they are required to attend three births. During this time, all doula care is overseen by a care coordinator who is also trained as a midwife.

“This program is a win-win for families in our county,” said Melissa Cheyney, PhD, LDM Director and Principal Investigator, CDP. “Any family can access the care of highly trained doulas at low cost, while more doulas become available for Medicaid-eligible families.”

Doula care has proven results, but can cost up to \$1000 per birth in our local community. CDP is one of a growing number of organizations in the United States working to ensure that the

benefits of doula care can be realized by those who are most impacted by health disparities in the United States. Research on the impact of the CDP has been highlighted at state, national and international conferences on how to improve birth outcomes for families.

While the program for Medicaid-eligible families is available year round, the low-cost services will only be open to the first 100 people to confirm care with a doula. Families with due dates from December 2021 - March 2022 are welcome to learn more about CDP doulas at www.communitydoulaprogram.org. Care can be requested from the CDP website.

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