

## Letter of Agreement Describing Doula (Labor Support) Services, Limits & Fees

### What is a doula?

As a birth doula, I accompany people in labor to help ensure a safe and satisfying birth experience. I have completed training approved by DONA International and have worked with over 125 families as of December 2022. I draw on my professional training, knowledge and experience to provide emotional support, physical contact, and as needed, communication with the staff to make sure you have the information you need to make informed decisions as they arise in labor. I can provide reassurance and perspective to you and your partner, make suggestions for labor progress, and help with relaxation, massage, positioning and other techniques for comfort. I am independent and self-employed. As your doula, I am working for you, not your caregiver or hospital.

### Before labor.

I will meet with you and your partner two or more times before labor to become acquainted, to explore and discuss your priorities and any fears or concerns, to discuss your birth preferences and to plan how we might best work together. I also want to know your own best ways of coping with pain and fatigue and how you and your partner foresee working together.

I will also inform you of times when I am unavailable for labor support. To cover those times, I will arrange one or more qualified back-up doulas whom you may also meet.

We may also decide on other meetings and will certainly want to remain in touch by telephone and/or email. In the case of unusual circumstances, we may also meet before labor begins virtually. Zoom or FaceTime are examples of platforms we might use.

### When you are in labor.

I prefer that you call me when you think you are in labor, even if you do not yet need me. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone. We will decide if I should come right then or wait for further change. I usually need approximately one hour to get to you from the time you ask me to come. We will also decide where to meet- at your home or at the hospital. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I will remain with you throughout your labor and birth.

In the case of unusual circumstances, support during labor and birth may happen virtually, such as via a video conferencing platform. Because video conferencing is not something that is used regularly, we will work together to determine the best way to meet your needs in labor and birth. Should video conferencing be necessary in labor and birth, such as during COVID-19 or other health pandemic, you will communicate your needs during labor and birth, should you need something other than what is provided. Examples: you prefer to remain in touch via telephone periodically during labor rather than continuous support, or, you prefer to have continuous video conferencing instead of the agreed upon periodic virtual support. I expect that you will communicate to me if your needs change from what we had discussed earlier.

### After birth.

I usually remain with you for one or two hours after birth, until you are comfortable and your family is

ready for quiet time together. I can also help with initial breastfeeding, if necessary. I will refer you to a certified lactation consultant or other qualified resource if I am unable to help with specific breastfeeding issues.

In the case of virtual support, you can expect that I will continue to provide virtual support until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together.

I am available to answer questions about the birth and would prefer to check in with you around days 2-5, days 7-10 and week 3.

*As a doula, I do not:*

1. Perform clinical tasks, such as blood pressure, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams, and others. I am there to provide only physical comfort and emotional support.
2. Make decisions for you. I will help you get the information necessary to make an informed decision. I will also remind you if there is a departure from your birth preferences.
3. Speak to the staff on your behalf. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, but you or your partner will speak directly to the clinical staff. Exceptions include reference to your birth preferences and physical needs (request for fluids, birth ball, etc.).

**Failure of a doula to provide services.**

I will make every effort to provide the services described here. Sometimes this is impossible (for example, with a rapid labor). If my failure to attend your birth is due to my error, there will be no charge for my services and I will refund the retaining fee. If it is due to circumstances beyond anyone's control or your failure to call me, I will keep the retaining fee but there will be no further charges. If a back-up doula is used, then it is implied this contract applies to her services, as well.

In the case of virtual support, it is understood that I remain on-call for you and should you decide not to contact me for virtual support, I will keep the retaining fee and there will be no further charges. In the case that I don't provide support during the labor and birth, due to circumstances beyond anyone's control or your failure to call me, postpartum support will still be available, per what's outlined in the contract.

**Fees. \$1100**

My fee for the services described here is, to be paid as follows:

\_\_\_\_\$800 is due when you select me as your doula.

\_\_\_\_\$300 is due by your 37th week.

I/We have read this letter describing the doula's services and agree that it reflects the discussion we had with her.

Date

Client \_\_\_\_\_

Client's Partner \_\_\_\_\_

Doula *Amy Beck*