

I. Scope

- A) **Services Rendered.** The doula accompanies the woman in labor, provides emotional and physical support, suggests comfort measures, and provides support and suggestions for the partner. Whenever possible, the doula provides pre- and post-partum emotional support, including explanation and discussion of practices and procedures, and assistance in acquiring the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about her care. Additionally, as doulas do not “prescribe” treatment, any suggestions or information provided within the role of the doula must be done with the proviso that the doula advises her client to check with her primary care provider before using any application.
- B) **Limits to Practice.** DONA International Standards and Certification apply to emotional, physical and informational support only. The DONA certified or member doula does not perform clinical or medical tasks, such as taking blood pressure or temperature, fetal heart tone checks, vaginal examinations or postpartum clinical care. The DONA certified or member doula will not diagnose or treat in any modality.
- i. If the doula has qualifications in alternative or complementary modalities (such as aromatherapy, childbirth education, massage therapy, placenta encapsulation, etc.), s/he must make it very clear to her/his clients and others that those modalities are an additional service, outside of the doula’s scope of practice.
 - ii. A healthcare provider (such as a nurse, midwife, chiropractor, etc.) may not refer to her/himself as a doula while providing services outside of a doula’s scope of practice.
 - iii. On the other hand, if a health care, alternative care or complementary care professional chooses to limit her/his services to those provided by doulas, it is acceptable according to DONA International’s Standards of Practice for her/him to describe her/himself as a doula.
- C) **Advocacy.** The doula advocates for the client's wishes as expressed in her birth plan, in prenatal conversations, and intrapartum discussion, by encouraging her client to ask questions of her care provider and to express her preferences and concerns. The doula helps the mother incorporate changes in plans if and when the need arises, and enhances the communication between client and care provider. Clients and doulas must recognize that the advocacy role does not include the doula speaking instead of the client or making decisions for the client. The advocacy role is best described as support, information, and mediation or negotiation.
- D) **Referrals.** For client needs beyond the scope of the doula’s training, referrals are made to appropriate resources.

II. Continuity of Care

- A) The doula should make back-up arrangements with another doula to ensure services to the client if the doula is unable to attend the birth. Should any doula feel a need to discontinue service to an established client, it is the doula’s responsibility to notify the client in writing and arrange for a replacement, if the client so desires. This may be accomplished by:
- Introducing the client to the backup doula
 - Suggesting that another member of DONA International or other doula may be more appropriate for the situation

- Contacting a DONA International Regional Representative or local doula organization for names of other doulas in the area
- Following up with the client or backup doula to make sure the client's needs are being accommodated

III. Training and Experience

- A) **Training**. Completion of a DONA approved birth doula workshop is but one step in the process of training and certification. Doulas who are certified by DONA International will have completed all the requirements as set forth in the DONA International Requirements for Birth Doula Certification.
- B) **Experience**. Doulas certified by DONA International will have the experience as set forth in the DONA International Requirements for Birth Doula Certification.
- C) **Maintenance of Certification**. DONA certified doulas will maintain certification as outlined in the DONA International recertification packet. Recertification must be completed after each three-year period of practice.

By signing this document, I agree to abide by DONA International's Standards of Practice.

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____