



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 244

Resolution calling on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide expanded funding for the Healthy Start Brooklyn doula program known as By My Side in order to make doulas available to all low-income birthing people in New York City.

By the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams) and Council Members Cabán, Hanif, Louis, Gutiérrez, Narcisse, Avilés, Joseph, Hudson, Ayala, Won, Rivera, De La Rosa, Brooks-Powers and Hanks

Whereas, The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) describes doulas as trained birth assistants who provide non-medical support to birthing parents and their partners before, during and after a child's birth; and

Whereas, The By My Side (BMS) birth support program is administered through Healthy Start Brooklyn, a federally-funded program based in the City's DOHMH Center for Health Equity, that provides free doula services to low-income birthing parents in Brooklyn who disproportionately face the risks of infant mortality, low birthweight, preterm birth and other challenges; and

Whereas, The BMS program's mission is also to encourage breastfeeding among low-income and immigrant parents, and educate through the use of doula services, thereby promoting the nutrients necessary for a healthy baby's brain growth and nervous system development; and

Whereas, According to the Cochrane Collaboration Review, a compilation of data from multiple peer-reviewed and evidenced-based studies, continuous labor supports provided by birth doulas has been scientifically proven to shorten labor by 41 minutes on average, reduce the risk of cesarean section delivery by 25 percent and has increased the likelihood of spontaneous vaginal births by eight percent; and

Whereas, DOHMH has reported doula services lead to improved birthing outcomes, with instrumental vaginal births or induced labor less likely and a reduced need for pain medications; and

Whereas; Additionally, doulas services lead to experiencing a more successful initiation of breastfeeding and self-reported positive experience in giving birth which facilitates better parent-baby bonding; and

Whereas, The DOHMH State of Doula Care in NYC 2021 Report clearly stated that while doulas alone cannot solve the inequities in birth outcomes that are the result of centuries of structural and medical racism nationwide, doulas do provide a positive health benefit in facilitating improved birth outcomes, particularly while working to eliminate racial inequities and decrease maternal deaths while reducing life-threatening complications related to childbirth; and

Whereas, Additional funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would allow the expansion of the DOHMH's BMS birth support program to serve low-income birthing parents in all five boroughs who are also part of a demographic that disproportionately face the risks of infant mortality, preterm birth, low birthweight and other challenges; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, The Council of the City of New York calls on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide expanded funding for the Healthy Start Brooklyn doula program known as By My Side in order to make doulas available to all low-income birthing people in New York City.

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5/24/22

