
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1704

Brief Description: Concerning doula services for incarcerated women.

Sponsors: Representatives DeBolt, Hayes, McDonald and Smith.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires jails and the Department of Corrections to make reasonable accommodations for the provision of doula services to inmates who are pregnant or have recently given birth.

Hearing Date: 2/3/17

Staff: Alexa Silver (786-7190).

Background:

Maternity Services for Incarcerated Women.

Prisons and jails provide for medically necessary health care services for incarcerated persons. This includes maternity services provided in prenatal care, delivery, and postpartum care. For pregnant prison inmates, services are provided in the facility that a Department of Corrections health care practitioner determines is appropriate for the level of service required. For pregnant inmates in jail, jail personnel transport the inmate to her prenatal medical appointments in the community.

When an incarcerated women is in labor, correctional personnel may not be present in the room, unless specifically requested by medical personnel. If a correctional employee's presence is requested by medical personnel, the employee should be female if practicable.

Washington Corrections Center for Women.

The Residential Parenting Program at the Washington Corrections Center for Women provides a residential setting to allow incarcerated mothers to keep their infants with them during their incarceration. To be eligible for participation, an inmate must meet certain criteria and be

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eligible for release prior to her infant turning 30 months old. The program includes prenatal and postnatal programs.

Doula Services.

A doula is a person who provides support to a woman before, during, and after childbirth. A doula may be trained and certified by a professional organization, but is not licensed as a health care provider.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Corrections (Department) and jails must make reasonable accommodations for the provision of available doula services to inmates who are pregnant or have given birth in the last six weeks. A person providing doula services must be granted appropriate facility access, be allowed to attend and provide assistance during labor and childbirth (where feasible), and have access to the inmate's relevant health care information if the inmate authorizes disclosure.

Nothing requires the Department or governing units to establish or provide funding for doula services, and nothing prevents the adoption of policy guidelines related to the delivery of doula services to inmates.

"Doula services" are defined as services provided by a trained doula that are designed to provide physical, emotional, and informational support to a pregnant woman before, during, and after delivery. Doula services may include support during labor and childbirth, prenatal and postpartum education, breastfeeding assistance, parenting education, and support in the event that a woman has been or will become separated from her child.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.