

GUIDELINE NUMBER: GL-PN-AM-003
CATEGORY: Perinatal Adm Mgt
DATE: February 2025
NEXT REVIEW DATE: February 2027

TITLE: Doulas at UF Health

PURPOSE: UF Health recognizes the role of doulas as part of the interdisciplinary healthcare team and works with them to provide the best possible experience while at UF Health Shands Hospital. The following are the doula guidelines set forth by UF Health to encourage a positive experience while in our facility.

STATEMENT:

- I. Doula Responsibilities:
 - A. The patient will hire the doula directly. Doulas are not employed or contracted by UF Health.
 - B. Upon entrance to the hospital, the doula will complete the check-in process on unit 34, which includes:
 1. Signing (or verifying on file) the UF Health Doula Guideline, completed with doula contact information. This guideline will be updated/signed annually.
 2. Receiving a doula badge from staff after verification of guideline completion. This requires a driver's license or state ID and will run a background check for sexual offenders.
 3. The staff member checking in the doula will call the charge nurse to notify them of the doula's arrival and which patient they are attending.
 - C. The doula shall wear the badge provided at all times while supporting the patient. If the doula decides not to complete the check-in process, including signing the guideline, they will be considered a visitor and must adhere to the visitor policy.
 - D. Doulas serve only a non-medical role prenatally, during labor and birth, and during the immediate postpartum period. Their role is to educate, comfort, and support the birthing person physically and emotionally and to enhance communication between the birthing person, their partner, and the medical professionals.
 - E. The Facility, patient, and doula recognize that the doula's advocacy role does not involve the doula speaking in lieu of the patient. Advocacy may include providing information to the patient, encouraging open communication with the providers, mediation, and/or negotiation. The doula will encourage communication between the patient and care provider(s) to address any proposed changes in care.
 - F. Doulas are responsible for attending to their own needs (rest, food, etc.) and should take breaks as necessary.
 - G. If the doula has qualifications/certifications/degrees/licenses, etc. in additional areas (such as nursing, midwifery, acupuncture, licensed massage therapy, chiropractic care, etc.), the doula must make it very clear to the patient and

others that those are additional services and are outside the doula scope of practice while serving in the role of a doula at UF Health.

- H. All doulas will treat patients, doctors, nurses, the community, and all other professionals with respect, maintaining the highest professional standards regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, and/or national origin.
- I. As a valued member of the healthcare team, the doula is an active participant in the practice of this guideline and can file a grievance if they feel the guideline has not been followed or have any other stated concerns, follow the Grievance pathway.

II. Facility Responsibilities

- A. UF Health recognizes the role of the birth doula as a part of the interdisciplinary health care team. The doula is not considered a visitor if wearing the doula printed badge.
- B. As such, the doula shall be permitted access to the following areas to provide support to the patient:
 - 1. Antepartum
 - 2. Triage
 - 3. Labor and Delivery
 - 4. Operating Room
 - 5. Recovery Room
 - 6. Mother Baby (Postpartum Unit)
 - 7. Nourishment Rooms

Exceptions include a Level 1 emergency and surgical events requiring general anesthesia. The charge Nurse and Attending Physician will decide on these incidents.

- C. If a care team member feels the guideline has not been followed or has any other stated concerns, follow the Grievance pathway.
- D. All staff will treat doulas with respect, maintaining the highest professional standards regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, and/or national origin.

III. Grievance Pathway:

- A. The UF Health Grievance Process exists for the following aims:
 - 1. to promote bidirectional accountability for the doulas in addition to the UF Health Team
 - 2. to systematically address specific incidents by those supporting the patients of UF Health
 - 3. to support professional standards for collaboration and care delivery between doulas and UF Health team
 - 4. to ensure fairness and consistency in the grievance process
- B. Grievance Process:
 - 1. Grievances may be filed by doulas, patients, family members, care team providers, and staff per identified general standards of practice or a complaint (an issue not related to practice standards).

2. The grievance must be filed within 30 days of the alleged misconduct. **If immediate resolution is needed, reach out to the nursing leadership on the unit and/or the nursing coordinator.** The grievance must include the following information (*the review committee may request additional information at their discretion*):
 - a. Name and contact of the person filing the grievance if requesting feedback
 - i. May file anonymously. If feedback is requested, must provide name and contact information.
 - b. Name and title of the professional the grievance is being filed against
 - c. Patient name (who was being cared for)
 - d. Supporting information including, but not limited to, date and time of the occurrence, location, and any supporting information
3. The UF Health doula grievance team will include the nursing management and leadership from the identified area and collaborate with at least 2 of our identified community doula partners.
 - a. The grievance shall be submitted:
 - i. Providers and hospital staff should use the ID Inc system to report issues. If immediate resolution is needed, reach out to the nursing leadership on the unit and/or the nursing coordinator.
 - ii. Doulas, patients, family members, etc. may submit the grievance via phone (352) 265-0123 or directly to the nurse manager on the unit the event occurred.
4. Resolution:
 - a. The investigation period will include reaching out to all parties identified to obtain additional information and further steps the grievance team deems necessary to come to a resolution.
 - b. If the UF Health doula grievance team deems probation necessary during investigation the doula will be notified and may still attend their patients in the capacity of a visitor.
 - c. After the UF Health doula grievance team concludes all inquiries, the resolution will be communicated to the identified party within four months of receiving the initial complaint. Resolutions can include anything from no action necessary, additional training and/or education relating to the area of expressed concern, probation, or removing the doula from practicing at UF Health.

KEYWORDS:

Doula, labor, birth

ASSOCIATED POLICIES:

- CP01.072 Photography and Audio Recordings at UF Health
- CP03.015 Confidential and Protected Information – Enforcement and Discipline

SIGNATURES:

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Dawn Viana

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Appendix A
Education Handout for Doulas

Your responsibilities while in the hospital are limited to your assigned patient under the direction of the patient's nurse. For your protection, this handout will provide you with information regarding safety issues.

- If a fire or loss of power occurs, you should immediately report to the Charge Nurse for further instructions.
- If you notice the malfunctioning of any piece of electrical equipment, please notify the patient's assigned nurse.
- To eliminate the risk of hazardous material exposure, do not handle any materials with which you are unfamiliar. Please ask the Charge Nurse if you have any questions about the supplies or materials in use in the patient's room.
- In accordance with Standard Precautions, you must perform hand hygiene when entering or leaving the patient's room. You must wear gloves when assisting with any patient care activities.
- Any disposable materials that have body fluids on them should be disposed of in a red-lined trash bag. All linen used should be placed in the linen container in the room.
- Do not discard any patient fluids or wastes without the knowledge of the patient's nurse.
- To assist in patient care and ongoing patient care planning needs, please report any patient events to the nurse. Immediately report any monitor or machine alarms and any concerning patient observations.
- Restraints may be used as a patient safety device. Please do not remove or replace any restraining devices.
- Any information regarding your assigned patient/family and other patient care activities on the unit is confidential and should not be discussed outside the patient care area or with any person not involved in the patient's care.