

# Characteristics and Birth Outcomes of PDX Doulas in the Context of All Oregon Birthing Persons

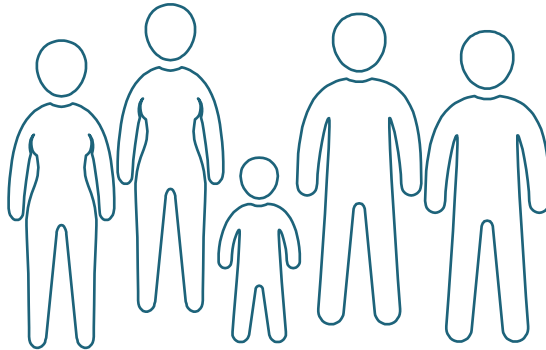
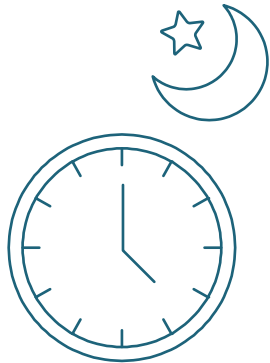
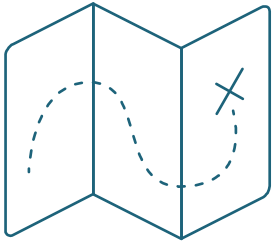
Paige Snow; BS, CD

MPH Epidemiology Candidate 2019 at OHSU-PSU School of Public Health  
Executive Director, PDX Doulas



## What is a doula?

- A birth professional that provides physical, emotional, and informational support to birthing persons and their families during pregnancy, intrapartum and postpartum
- In Oregon – can be a Traditional Health Worker (THW)



# Public Health Significance



The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

## COMMITTEE OPINION SUMMARY

Number 687 • February 2017

### Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth

**ABSTRACT:** Obstetrician–gynecologists, in collaboration with midwives, nurses, patients, and those who support them in labor, can help women meet their goals for labor and birth by using techniques that are associated with minimal interventions and high rates of patient satisfaction. Many common obstetric practices are of limited or uncertain benefit for low-risk women in spontaneous labor. For women who are in latent labor and are not admitted, a process of shared decision making is recommended. Admission during the latent phase of labor may be necessary for a variety of reasons. A pregnant woman with term premature rupture of membranes (also known as prelabor rupture of membranes) should be assessed, and the woman and her obstetrician–gynecologist or other obstetric care provider should make a plan for expectant management versus admission and induction. Data suggest that in women with normally progressing labor and no evidence of fetal compromise, routine amni-

## Public Health Significance

- Doula support widespread
  - Small research base
  - Potential to meet the Triple Aim and reduce disparities
  - Slow integration into MCS

**The gold standard of doula professionalism in  
a spirit of collaboration with health care  
providers.**

## PDX Doulas - Services

- Collaborative Practice Training
- Volunteer **intrapartum only support**
  - Shifts
  - Weekends
  - Free to patients who may not normally access a doula
- Referrals for community-based support

## Questions

- How do characteristics and outcomes from volunteer PDX Doula births compare to Oregon Vital Statistics (VS), 2012 to 2016?
- Are our doulas helpful in providing physical and emotional support to **birthing persons**?
- Are our doulas helpful in providing support to **birthing partners**?
- **Overall, are our doulas helpful to families and OHSU professionals?**

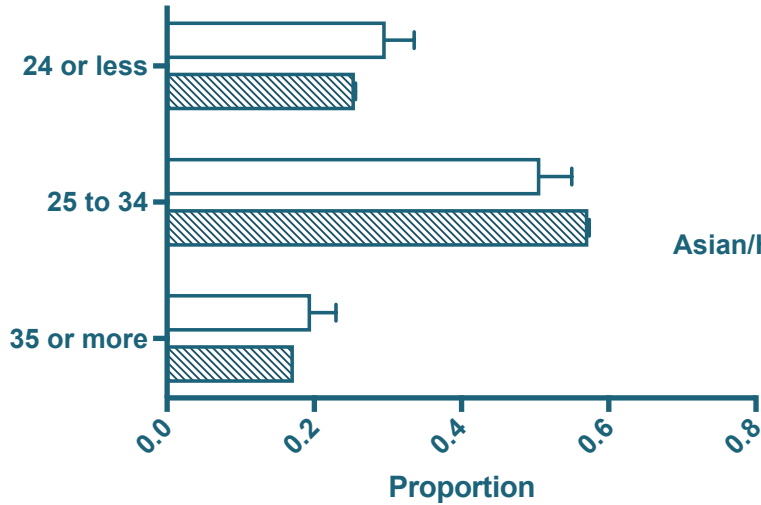
## Analytic Approach

- **Two-part** descriptive analysis of the PDX Doula volunteer program
  1. Maternal, labor, and delivery characteristics
  2. Summary of evaluations by pertinent stakeholders
- Excluded observations where doula were not present at delivery (n=208 → n=157)

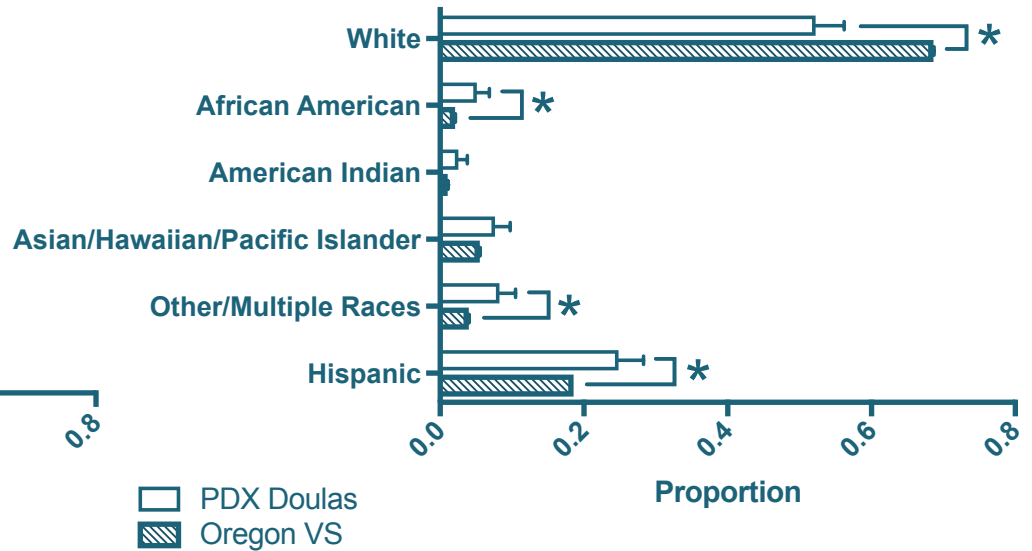


# Descriptive Results

### Maternal Age

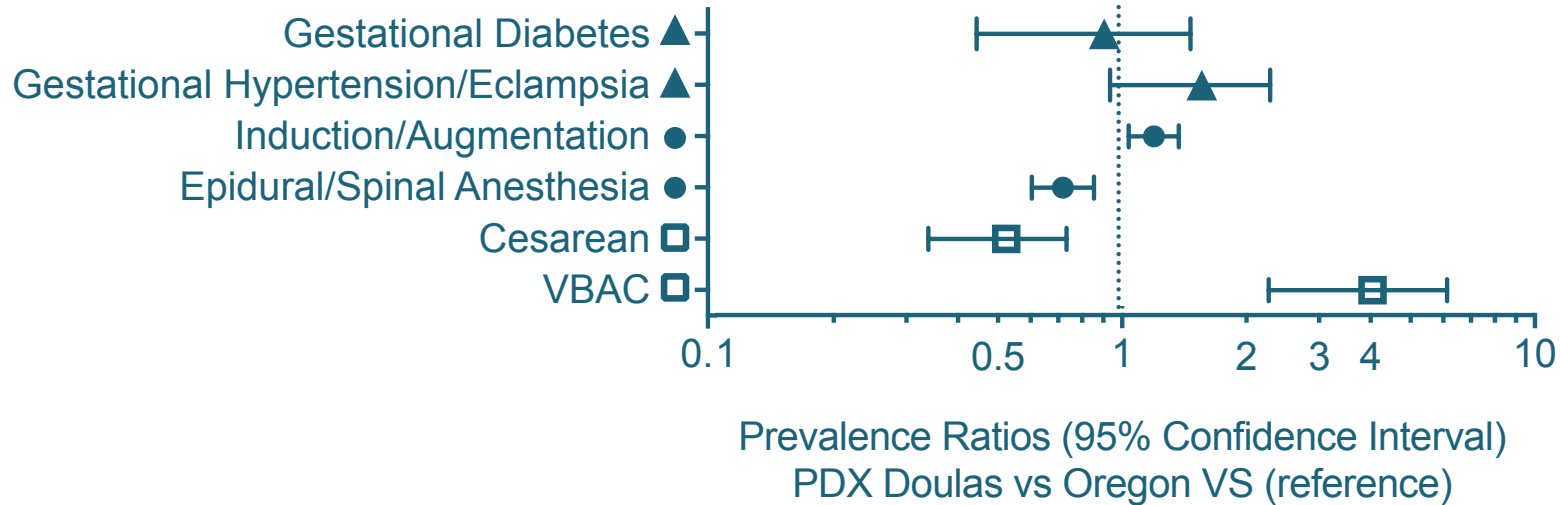


### Maternal Race/Ethnicity



## Descriptive Results

### Characteristics of Labor, Delivery & Maternal Conditions



## Evaluations

- Were the techniques suggested by the doula helpful
  - to the **birthing person** in handling the **physical aspects of labor**?
  - to the **birthing person** in handling the **emotional aspects of labor**?
  - for the **partner** and/or other family members and friends present for the labor?
- Overall, how would you evaluate the **usefulness** of having a doula present?
- Scale
  - 5 – Was a big help
  - 3 – Neither helped nor hurt
  - 1 – More harm than good

## Evaluation Results

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### All Evaluations Combined (n=302)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

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Physical 88.9 (268)

Emotional 86.6 (261)

Partner 86.8 (255)

Overall 93.1 (281)

# Evaluation Results

## Birthing Person Evaluations (n=65)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

Physical	90.8 (59)
Emotional	90.8 (59)
Partner	83.9 (52)
Overall	92.2 (59)

## Partner Evaluations (n=75)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

Physical	97.3 (73)
Emotional	86.7 (65)
Partner	94.7 (71)
Overall	100.0 (75)

## Family/Friend Evaluations (n=10)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

Physical	100.0 (10)
Emotional	100.0 (10)
Partner	90.0 (9)
Overall	90.0 (9)

# Evaluation Results

## Nurse Evaluations (n=125)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

Physical	82.3 (102)
Emotional	82.3 (102)
Partner	82.6 (100)
Overall	89.6 (112)

## Midwife Evaluations (n=13)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

Physical	92.3 (12)
Emotional	84.6 (11)
Partner	84.6 (11)
Overall	92.3 (12)

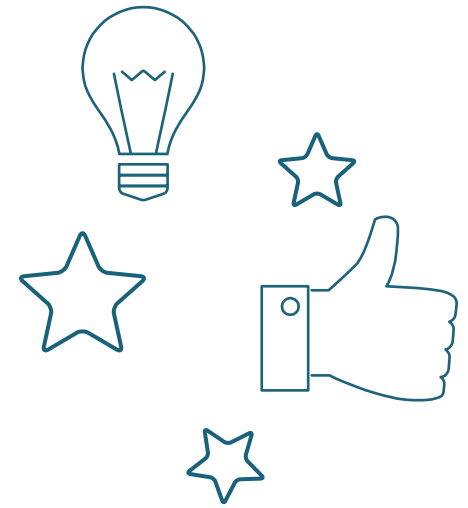
## Doctor Evaluations (n=15)

Score of 5 - was a big help

% (n)

Physical	80.0 (12)
Emotional	93.3 (14)
Partner	85.7 (12)
Overall	93.3 (14)

# Overall, PDX Doulas were helpful to families and OHSU professionals.



PDX Doulas were useful in providing support to birthing individuals who were undergoing an induction or augmentation of labor and who were interested in preserving physiologic birth and reducing interventions.



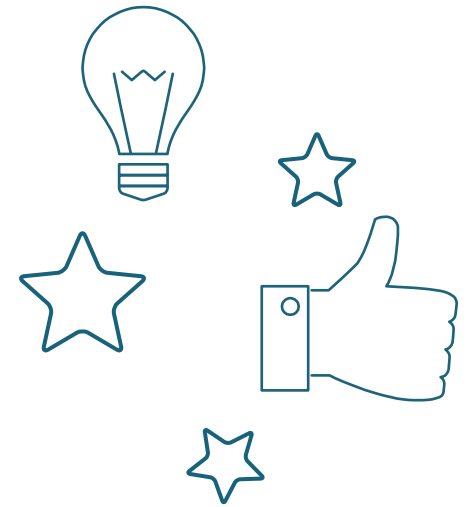
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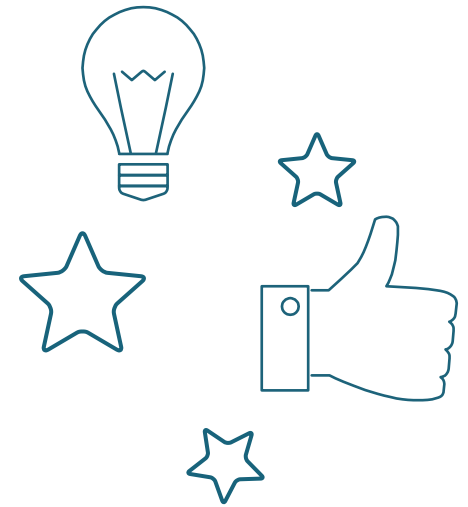
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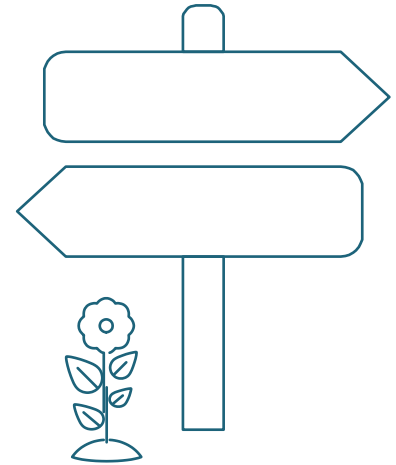
- PDX Doulas collaborate with birth professionals, patients and their families.
- PDX Doulas are associated with minimal interventions and higher patient satisfaction.

## Discussion

- Strengths
  - Overall positive feedback from 5 years of intrapartum only support
  - Addresses gaps in the literature - provides perspective of pertinent stakeholders
- Limitations
  - Comparison not to OHSU or weekend specific
  - Selection bias - birthing persons opt in

## Future Directions at PDX Doulas

- Medicaid Billing Provider aka “doula hub”
  - Promote THW Doulas
  - Community-Based Support
  - Recruit and train new doulas that reflect the populations served
  - Cost to families – reduced or free
- Build more research infrastructure to ask more advanced questions



## Acknowledgements

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- *Volunteer Services, OHSU*
- *Volunteer Doulas, PDX Doulas*

THANKS!

**Any questions?**

You can reach me at: [snow@ohsu.edu](mailto:snow@ohsu.edu)

You can find PDX Doulas at: [pdxdoulas.org](http://pdxdoulas.org)