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Letter of Agreement for Birth Doula Services

What is a Birth Doula?

A doula accompanies women and their families in labor to help ensure a safe, satisfying, family-centered birth experience. As a doula, I draw upon my knowledge and experience to provide information, emotional support, physical comfort and communication with the hospital staff to assist you in making informed decisions as the need arises in labor. I can provide reassurance and perspective to you and your partner, explain procedures in detail, make suggestions for labor progress, and help with relaxation, massage, positioning and other techniques for comfort. I am independent and self-employed. For references and information regarding my experience, please don't hesitate to ask.

Overview of Doula Services

I prefer to meet with you and your partner for a consultation before you make any final decision about retaining my services. This meeting does not obligate you in any way. If you do select me, here is an outline of what I will provide:

- After an initial consultation and hiring, I will want to meet with you an additional 2-4 times prior to birth to discuss your options and preferences for labor, birth & postpartum support.
- I also want to know your own best ways of coping with pain and fatigue, and how you and your partner foresee working together as a birth team.
- In our meetings, I will also provide you with information to supplement any prenatal classes you may take. Or, if you wish, I can provide private prenatal classes in your home as part of our prenatal visits.
- I will gladly attend one of your prenatal visits with your OB/Gyn or Midwife.
- Additionally, I am available for telephone or email consultations and support.

I will inform you of the rare times when I may be unavailable for labor support. To cover those times, I can arrange one or more back-up doulas that you can also meet. Of course, you have as much choice in selecting a back up as in choosing your primary doula.

If at any time during my service you feel you would rather not work with me, or if I feel you would be better served by another doula, it is agreed that this will be discussed and referrals made for alternate care. If you should choose to work with another doula, or if for any reason either party decides to end our client-provider relationship, the \$250 retainer fee will be forfeit by you for services and time rendered up to the time of termination.

Late Pregnancy

I am available for phone consultations and email questions in late pregnancy, and encourage you to call as needed with questions or updates. Once we enter the on-call period (2 weeks before and after due date), I encourage you to check in with me frequently via phone to let me know how you're doing.

When you are in Labor

I prefer that you call me as soon as you think you are in labor, even if you do not yet need me to be with you. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone to help you through the initial onset of labor. Together we will decide if I should meet you immediately, or wait for further changes (I usually need approximately 30 minutes to one hour to get to you). We will also decide where to meet - at your home or the hospital. Excluding extraordinary circumstances, I (or my back up) will remain with you throughout the labor and birth.

After the Birth

I will remain with you for up to two hours after the birth of your baby, until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together. I can help with initial breastfeeding if you wish, and can give referrals for a post partum doula or lactation consultant for further assistance in your home. I am available by phone or email to answer questions about your birth or your baby, immediately post partum. I would like to get together with you within two weeks after your baby's birth to see how you are doing, talk about your birth, present you with your birth story, and provide you with additional referrals for any post partum services you may need.

Limitations of Doula Practice

As a Doula, I do not make decisions for you. I will help you obtain the information necessary to make an informed decision. I will also gently remind you if there is a departure from the "plans" you had prior to the labor. Ultimately, all decisions are yours.

As a Doula, I do not perform clinical tasks such as blood pressure readings, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams, and perineal massage. I am available to provide you with information, physical comfort, emotional support, and advocacy.

As a Doula, I do not speak to the staff on your behalf. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, but you or your partner will speak on your own behalf to the clinical staff. I may suggest a "time out" after any suggestion for intervention made by hospital staff, so that you and your partner can discuss your options and make a comfortable decision about any suggested procedures. I may also relay information to staff upon your request or approval.

I will make every effort to provide the services described herein. Sometimes this is impossible (for example, with a rapid labor). If my failure to attend your birth is due to my error, or due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, there will be no charge for my services beyond the \$250 retaining fee, which covers the cost of prenatal visit(s), handouts and my availability. If you fail to call me, and therefore I do not attend your birth, you will owe the full cost of services (sliding scale to be agreed upon: between \$1000 - \$1300, less retaining fee of \$250).

Client Information

Mother's Name:

Father's / Partner's Name:

Address:

Phone Number(s):

Baby's Expected Arrival Date:

Planned Location of Birth:

Primary Caregiver (Physician or Midwife):

Caregiver's Phone:

Fees

My fees for the services described above are based on a sliding scale of \$1000 - \$1300. The fee is to be paid as follows:

- \$250 as a retainer fee, due when you select me as your doula (to be paid with signed agreement).
- The remainder is due at your first post partum visit (or within 3 weeks after your birth).
- Please indicate your rate of service based on the sliding scale \$1000 - \$1300: \$_____

Agreement

I / we have read this letter of agreement describing the doula's services and agree upon these terms:

Mother's Name (Please Print):

Mother's Signature:

Date:

Father's/Partner's Name (Please Print):

Father's/Partner's Signature:

Date:

To retain my services, you may complete this form and return it to me via post along with your \$250 deposit.