

2020 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 502

BY REPRESENTATIVE WILLARD

INSURANCE/HEALTH: Provides for health insurance coverage for maternity services provided by doulas

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 22:1057, relative to health insurance coverage for doula services; to require  
3 health insurance coverage for maternity services provided by doulas; to provide for  
4 legislative findings; to prohibit discrimination; to define key terms; to provide for  
5 applicability; to establish an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 22:1057 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

8 §1057. Required coverage for services provided by doulas; discrimination  
9 prohibited

10 A. The legislature hereby finds and affirms all of the following:

11 (1) Doulas are trained professionals who provide continuous physical,  
12 emotional, and informational support to mothers before, during, and shortly after  
13 childbirth.

14 (2) Leading professional societies, such as the American College of  
15 Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, and federal  
16 agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health  
17 Resources and Services Administration, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid  
18 Services, have recognized the well-established benefits of doula services.

1           (3) Research has demonstrated that support from a doula is associated with  
2           lower caesarian section rates, fewer obstetric interventions, fewer complications  
3           during and after childbirth, decreased use of pain medication, shorter labor hours,  
4           and higher scores on the APGAR test, which indicates how well the baby is doing  
5           outside the womb.

6           (4) As Louisiana currently ranks as a state with one of the highest maternal  
7           mortality rates in the United States, this state has an obligation to promote practices  
8           that improve maternal health outcomes.

9           B.(1) Any health coverage plan delivered or issued for delivery in this state  
10          that provides benefits for maternity services shall include coverage for services  
11          provided by a doula before, during, and after childbirth.

12          (2) The coverage provided in this Section may be subject to annual  
13          deductibles, coinsurance, and copayment provisions as are consistent with those  
14          established under the health coverage plan.

15          C. Terminology in any health coverage plan policy or contract deemed  
16          discriminatory against doulas and doula services shall be void.

17          D. For purposes of this Section, the following definitions apply:

18          (1) "Health coverage plan" means any hospital, health, or medical expense  
19          insurance policy, hospital or medical service contract, employee welfare benefit plan,  
20          contract, or other agreement with a health maintenance organization or a preferred  
21          provider organization, health and accident insurance policy, or any other insurance  
22          contract of this type in this state, including a group insurance plan, a self-insurance  
23          plan, and the Office of Group Benefits programs. "Health coverage plan" shall not  
24          include a plan providing coverage for excepted benefits as defined in R.S. 22:1061,  
25          limited benefit health insurance plans, and short-term policies that have a term of  
26          less than twelve months.

27          (2) "Doula" means a trained provider certified by an entity that is nationally  
28          recognized for training and certifying doulas who provide physical, emotional, and

1        educational support, but not medical or midwife care, to pregnant and birthing  
2        persons and their families before, during, and after childbirth.

3        Section 2(A). This Act shall become effective on January 1, 2021.

4        (B) This Act shall apply to any new policy, contract, program, or health coverage  
5        plan issued on and after January 1, 2021. Any policy, contract, or health coverage plan in  
6        effect prior to January 1, 2021, shall convert to conform to the provisions of this Act on or  
7        before the renewal date, but no later than January 1, 2021.

---

#### DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

---

HB 502 Original

2020 Regular Session

Willard

**Abstract:** Requires health insurance coverage for maternity services provided by doulas.

Proposed law requires any health coverage plan delivered or issued for delivery in this state that provides benefits for maternity services to include coverage for services provided by a doula before, during, and after childbirth, subject to annual deductibles, coinsurance, and copayment provisions as are consistent with those established under the health coverage plan.

Proposed law prohibits terminology in any health coverage plan policy or contract deemed discriminatory against doulas and doula services.

Proposed law defines "health coverage plan" and "doula".

Effective on Jan. 1, 2021.

(Adds R.S. 22:1057)