Interim Guidance for Perinatal Care during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented vulnerability for pregnant and postpartum people. Now, more than ever, we need to come together to protect birth parents and their newborns through pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. We appreciate your commitment and sacrifice in your care of pregnant and postpartum people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Pregnant and postpartum people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be supported to make informed decisions** regarding planning for a hospital or home-based delivery, as well as feeding and rooming in versus separation from their baby after birth. People cope best when their experiences align with their expectations and understanding. Whenever possible, providers should have conversations with patients about pregnancy, delivery options and safety concerns, and caring for their baby with COVID-19 before labor and delivery. These conversations should include information about the following:

- How to prevent passing COVID-19 to their baby after birth. This might include recommendations that the birth parent(s) and baby stay in different rooms or that they stay in the same room using a face mask or cloth face covering and washing their hands often.
- Nursing, pumping and formula feeding with COVID-19.
- How to prevent passing COVID-19 to their baby at home.
- Because there is so much complexity and nuance to COVID-19, normal discharge instructions and protocols are inadequate. While coordinating early postpartum follow-up consider; peer counseling, lactation support, follow-up nursing calls, telehealth home visiting, and additional postpartum appointments.

**Behavioral health needs should be addressed with culturally congruent care** throughout pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. Birthing individuals should have a plan of care for the postpartum period that addresses any birth trauma resulting from the loss of planned birth supports and any separation of the birth parent from their baby due to isolation or quarantine.

**Doula support at birth improves maternal and infant outcomes** and is particularly essential for people of color, people with different birth beliefs, people with different cultural beliefs, and people with language barriers. Many hospital systems have found ways to keep doulas at the bedside despite PPE shortages. Doulas should be considered an essential part of the care team.

**More COVID-19 Information and Resources**

Stay up-to-date on the current COVID-19 situation in Washington, Governor Inslee’s proclamations, symptoms, how it spreads, and how and when people should get tested. See our Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.
The risk of COVID-19 is not connected to race, ethnicity or nationality. *Stigma will not help to fight the illness.* Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19)
- WA State Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)
- Find Your Local Health Department or District
- CDC Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Stigma Reduction Resources

**Have more questions about COVID-19?** Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127.** For interpretative services, press # when they answer and **say your language.** (Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your health care provider.

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