



## **Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors** *Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, 4th District*

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### **City and County of Milwaukee to Partner on Providing 100 Doulas for Improved Birth Outcomes**

MILWAUKEE – County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic is proposing to allocate \$52,000 to fund 100 doulas, or birth companions, to improve birth and maternal health in the 53206 Zip Code.

Dimitrijevic's proposal calls for the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate with the City of Milwaukee on the pilot program. The City's Health Department would be responsible for administering the program, and the County would be responsible for funding the program and marketing it to eligible low-income women.

*"Our pilot program to provide doulas to 100 mothers will empower women, improve maternal health, and give more babies in Milwaukee a strong start for healthy lives. An example of better health outcomes through increased pregnancy and birth support is higher rates of breastfeeding. Breastfeeding and strong maternal health have a direct impact on reducing infant mortality," said Dimitrijevic.*

The City of Milwaukee's Public Health and Safety Committee voted unanimously today to direct the City Health Department to develop the joint pilot program with Milwaukee County.

Alderman Khalif Rainey sponsored a Common Council resolution to establish the pilot program.

*"Women of color and low income women are the most likely to want but not have access to doula services. A stronger Milwaukee results in a healthier state which Governor Evers recently acknowledged in his new doula initiative, which is aimed at strengthening families and empowering women's health," said Rainey.*

Governor Evers included \$618,700 to fund doula training and services in his 2019-21 budget.

The use of doulas, who are non-medical specialists that assist mothers before, during, and after childbirth, is well known for improving birth outcomes, and for improving the health of mothers after giving birth.

Doulas are often colloquially referred to as a pregnancy and birth companion, and typically provide physical, informational and emotional support to a pregnant mother and baby.

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