

NEW YORK
state department of
HEALTH

Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

Sue Kelly
Executive Deputy Commissioner

November 18, 2011

Ms. Elan McAllister, President
Choices in Childbirth
441 Lexington Avenue, 19th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. McAllister:

This is in response to your recent email to Governor Cuomo, requesting that Medicaid coverage of doula services be included in the Medicaid Redesign Team's list of recommendations.

The New York State Department of Health considers Choices in Childbirth's interest in getting doula services covered under Medicaid as valued and important. We are always looking for ways to reduce costs and increase quality and efficiency in the Medicaid program. The information you provided concerning the reduction in cesarean section births is particularly interesting. Thank you for sharing the research and statistical information for our review.

The provision of doula services is a complex issue and the proposal to provide coverage was presented to the Medicaid Redesign Team Basic Benefit Review Work group. A decision was made not to pursue Medicaid coverage for services provided by doulas at this time.

Thank you for your letter in support of Medicaid coverage of doula services. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact Connie Donohue of my staff at (518) 473-2160.

Sincerely



Ronald Bass, Director
Bureau of Medicaid Policy and Coverage
Division of Financial Planning and Policy
Office of Health Insurance Programs