

# Childbirth and breastfeeding support demonstration beneficiary FAQs

## What is the purpose of the childbirth and breastfeeding support demonstration?

To evaluate the impact of trained, non-medical professionals on beneficiary satisfaction throughout pregnancy and maternity and fetal outcomes in the Military Health System (MHS).

## Where is the demonstration available?

The demonstration is available in all 50 states from Jan. 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2026. Beneficiaries who live overseas or in the US territories are eligible for the demonstration beginning Jan. 1, 2025.

## Who is eligible for the six outpatient visits covered under each part of the demonstration?

Both TRICARE Prime and Select beneficiaries can participate in group breastfeeding and attend sessions with Certified Labor Doulas (CLD), lactation counselors and lactation consultants during this demonstration.

To qualify for the childbirth benefit with a certified labor doula, you must:

- Be enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select
- Be at least 20 weeks pregnant
- Plan to give birth with a TRICARE-authorized provider
- Not planning to give birth in a military hospital or clinic

To qualify for the breastfeeding benefit with a certified lactation counselor, consultant or group breastfeeding, you must:

- Be enrolled in TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select
- Be at least 27 weeks pregnant
- Eligible for TRICARE's breastfeeding support benefit

## Am I eligible for this demonstration if I give birth in a military hospital or clinic?

Beneficiaries who plan to give birth in a military hospital or clinic are not eligible for the childbirth section of this demonstration. Some military hospitals and clinics

may permit doulas during labor whether the doula be a volunteer, paid for by the family or reimbursed under another program.

However, beneficiaries who give birth in a military hospital or clinic can receive the breastfeeding counseling services under this demonstration if they are referred by their provider to another provider covered by Humana Military. TRICARE will not cover breastfeeding counseling that takes place in a military hospital or clinic. However, some military hospitals and clinics already have lactation consultants on staff.

## How do I find a doula, lactation counselor or lactation consultant?

Doulas, lactation counselors and lactation consultants can be searched in our [network provider directory](#) by name or specialty and ZIP Code. You can also find a practitioner in our [non-network directory](#) under the category "Hospitals, Clinics, Urgent Care Centers and Other Healthcare Services."

## Do I qualify if I give birth without a TRICARE-authorized provider (i.e. lay midwife)?

No, you must give birth with a TRICARE-authorized medical provider through Humana Military to qualify for services under this demonstration.

## Childbirth benefit

### What's a Certified Labor Doula (CLD)?

A certified labor doula is a trained, non-medical professional who supports birthing parents before, during, and after labor. A doula can't provide medical services like examining the cervix, but a doula provides physical, emotional, and informational support for the birthing parent during the labor process, supporting the birthing parent during vaginal birth or a Cesarean section (C section).

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## Is a labor doula the same as a midwife?

No; A midwife can provide medical care during and after pregnancy, labor doulas are non-medical professionals.

## How do I get services from a certified labor doula, lactation counselor or consultant?

TRICARE will stand up a network of certified labor doulas for you to receive services throughout this demonstration. You're encouraged to use a network provider to avoid additional cost-shares or complications with the reimbursement of claims.

## Will I have to pay additional cost-shares for services under this demonstration?

If you and your provider are eligible, you can receive services under this demonstration as part of the birth event and will not be charged separate cost-shares. Standard cost-shares for the birth event still apply.

## Can I receive services from any labor doula, lactation counselor or lactation consultant and get reimbursed, even if out of the network?

Yes, you can receive these types of care from outside of the network, but TRICARE will only reimburse services provided by a labor doula, lactation counselor or lactation consultant who meets all (not some or most) of the requirements for a TRICARE-certified provider under the demonstration.

You should verify your labor doula, lactation counselor or lactation consultant's eligibility with Humana Military before signing any contract or agreement with them or filing claims for reimbursement.

## Is my provider allowed to balance bill me?

TRICARE law and regulations forbid providers from balance-billing. You should not agree to pay any amount. Your best protections are to use a network provider and to have your provider file a claim, rather than paying out of pocket and filing a claim after the fact.

## Can I get services from a labor doula who isn't certified or licensed and still get reimbursed?

No, TRICARE will only reimburse services provided by a labor doula who meets all the requirements set under the demonstration.

## Is there particular criteria my doula needs to meet to provide services to me?

Your certified labor doula must be at least 18 years old and meet all criteria below to be reimbursed for this demonstration:

- Education. The contractor must ensure the CLD has:
  - Attended a minimum of 24 education hours to include:
    - The physiology of labor,
    - Labor doula training,
    - Antepartum doula training, and
    - Postpartum doula training.
  - **Note:** The contractor must not count self-paced learning such as reading a book or writing an essay; however, the contractor must count remote synchronous or asynchronous online courses or in person courses.
  - Attended one or more breastfeeding courses.
  - Attended one or more childbirth classes.
- Experience. The contractor must ensure the CLD has, within the last three years:
  - Provided continuous in-person childbirth support for at least three childbirths as the primary labor doula supporting the birthing parent, with a minimum of 15 hours over the three childbirths. The contractor must ensure at least two of the three births were a vaginal birth.
  - Provided antepartum and postpartum support for at least one birth.
- Certification Requirement. The contractor must ensure the CLD holds a current certification as a CLD, certified doula, or similar perinatal certification (postpartum doula certification by itself does not

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qualify), obtained within the last three years from one of the following organizations:

- BirthWorks International
  - Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association
  - Doulas of North America (DONA) International
  - International Childbirth Education Association
  - ToLABOR
- License Requirement. If a state or local jurisdiction offers a doula, childbirth support, or similar licensure or certification, the contractor must require such a license or certification, even if it's optional in the state or local jurisdiction. (**Note:** no states currently require a license for doulas; however, this is a common TRICARE provider requirement and is there so that if a state begins to regulate doulas, it's clear that TRICARE will also require that licensure.)
  - Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification. The contractor must ensure the CLD maintains a current adult, child, and infant CPR certification.
  - National Provider Identification (NPI) Number. The contractor must require the CLD to submit claims under their own NPI number. Overseas providers are exempt from this requirement.

## Can I still get reimbursed if my labor doula is certified but not by one of the organizations listed?

No, only labor doulas certified by the approved organizations are eligible for reimbursement during this demonstration.

## Can I have a doula's support during labor if I give birth at home?

Yes, but you must give birth with a TRICARE-authorized provider.

**Note:** Point of Service charges will apply without a referral if you select a non-network provider.

## What should I do if I'm giving birth in the first three months of 2022 and I cannot find a network doula?

If you are due in the first few months of the benefit while the demonstration is still finalizing implementation, you are, unfortunately, at the greatest risk of not having your care covered because networks are still being established and providers credentialed. Talk to Humana Military about your options or review the TRICARE Operation Manual language with the doula and get them to confirm that they meet all the requirements, including that they will accept TRICARE's reimbursement rate. If you choose to sign a contract with a doula, this is between you and the doula and TRICARE is not a party to that contract. It cannot be guaranteed that your care will be covered.

## Breastfeeding benefit

### What's the difference between a lactation counselor and a lactation consultant?

Lactation counselors are trained to provide breastfeeding counseling to support normal lactation of breastfeeding parents of healthy, full-term infants. Lactation consultants have the highest level of breastfeeding training and can provide a full range of breastfeeding care. A lactation consultant can provide all the services a lactation counselor can provide, plus the additional services that may be necessary when complex problems surrounding breastfeeding arise. Examples of reasons why you might choose a lactation consultant over a lactation counselor could be that your infant is underweight or was born pre-term, or that you are nursing multiples.

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## **TRICARE Prime and Select already cover six outpatient sessions for breastfeeding counseling/consultation. What's different for this demonstration?**

TRICARE's existing breastfeeding benefit requires that all lactation counseling or consulting services are provided by a TRICARE-certified medical provider (PCM, RN, etc.). This demonstration expands that coverage to include sessions and services provided by professionals who are trained to provide lactation counseling or consultation but are not TRICARE-certified medical providers. TRICARE now also covers group breastfeeding sessions in addition to the previously covered individual breastfeeding sessions.

## **Will I have to pay additional cost-shares for services under this demonstration?**

Cost-shares, copayments and deductibles don't apply to covered breastfeeding counseling services if you are eligible. If you receive services from a TRICARE-certified lactation counselor or lactation consultant outside of the network, you can file a claim for reimbursement based on TRICARE's approved rate.

## **Is there particular criteria my lactation counselor needs to meet to provide services to me?**

Your lactation counselor must be at least 18 years old and meet all the requirements below to be reimbursed for this demonstration:

- Certification requirement. The lactation counselor must hold a current certification by the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice, Inc. (ALPP) as a Certified Lactation Counselor.
- License requirement. If a state or local jurisdiction offers a lactation counselor licensure or certification, the contractor must require the license or certification, even if it's optional in the state or local jurisdiction.
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification. The lactation counselor must maintain a current adult, child, and infant CPR certification.
- National Provider Identification (NPI) Number. The

contractor must require the lactation consultant to submit claims under their own NPI number. Overseas providers are exempt from this requirement.

## **Is there particular criteria my lactation consultant needs to meet to provide services to me?**

Your lactation consultant must be at least 18 years old and meet all the requirements below to be reimbursed through this demonstration:

- Certification requirement. The lactation consultant must hold a current certification as a lactation consultant by one of the following organizations:
  - International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners. Certification as an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) qualifies.
  - Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice, Inc. (ALPP). Certification as an Advanced Lactation Consultant or an Advanced Nurse Lactation Consultant qualifies.
- License requirement. If a state or local jurisdiction offers a lactation consultant licensure or certification, the contractor must require the license or certification, even if it's optional in the state or local jurisdiction.
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification. The lactation consultant must maintain a current adult, child, and infant CPR certification.
- National Provider Identification (NPI) Number. The contractor must require the lactation consultant to submit claims under their own NPI number. Overseas providers are exempt from this requirement.

## **Can I be reimbursed for services already given before this demonstration started?**

No, this demonstration covers sessions that have begun after Jan. 1, 2022.

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## **Can I get six breastfeeding counseling sessions from my doctor, plus six from a lactation counselor or consultant?**

No, the six-session limit is the total number of counseling session whether under the existing benefit or the demonstration.

## **If I have twins, do I qualify for 12 breastfeeding counseling sessions?**

No, the six-session limit applies to the breastfeeding parent. The children are not eligible for breastfeeding counseling.

## **Do I still qualify for breastfeeding services under this demonstration if my child was born before I reached 27 weeks?**

Yes

## **Can I receive childbirth services via telemedicine under the CBSD?**

Continuous labor support cannot be provided via telemedicine/telehealth; however, telemedicine visits before (antepartum) and shortly after birth (postpartum) visits are allowed.