

# BAYSTATE MEDICAL CENTER

## BIRTH EQUITY AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE INCLUSION OF DOULA EXPERTISE (BESIDE) INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Program Launched on November 1, 2021



**\$243,457<sup>1</sup>**  
**AWARD AMOUNT**

Baystate Medical Center ("Baystate"), in collaboration with Springfield Family Doulas, is building a new doula program to serve Black birthing people.



### TARGET POPULATION

Black birthing people over age 18  
who speak English



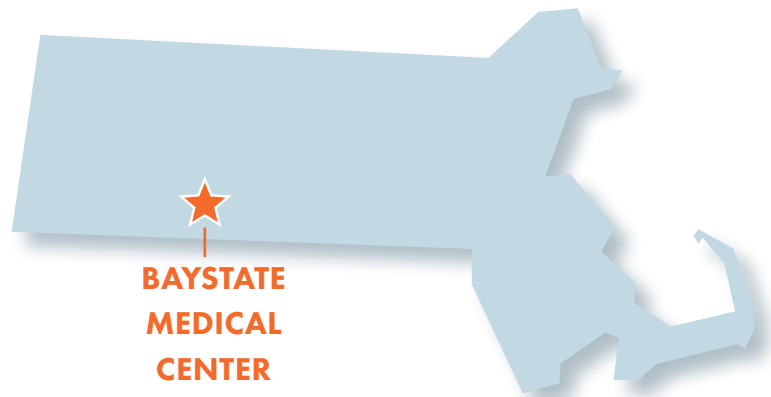
### NEW VS. EXPANSION

The BESIDE funding supports the  
establishment of a new doula program.



### EMPLOYED VS. CONTRACTED

Baystate Medical Center is contracting  
with Springfield Family Doulas for  
doula services.



**BAYSTATE  
MEDICAL  
CENTER**

### DOULA

A trained professional who provides **non-medical care** including, but not limited to, **education** and **general support** before, during, and after the birth of a child.



### ABOUT BESIDE

The Birth Equity and Support through the Inclusion of Doula Expertise (BESIDE) Investment Program aims to address inequities in maternal health care and improve the care and patient experience of Black birthing people by increasing access to and use of doula services. Awardees offer doula services to patients through pregnancy, labor and delivery, and the postpartum period to support patients' social and emotional needs. In addition to providing culturally concordant doula services for Black birthing people, BESIDE awardees engage in activities to embed a racial equity lens in their clinics and support a culture of understanding and mutual respect between doulas and other clinical or administrative staff.

1. Baystate Medical Center was originally awarded \$193,457. On March 9, 2023, the HPC awarded Baystate Medical Center an additional \$50,000, or \$243,457 in total.

# BAYSTATE MEDICAL CENTER

## BIRTH EQUITY AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE INCLUSION OF DOULA EXPERTISE (BESIDE) INVESTMENT PROGRAM



### SUPPORTING THE DOULA WORKFORCE

Program staff support professional development training for the Springfield Family Doulas, including train-the-trainer doula certification classes, prenatal yoga instructor training, Lamaze childbirth educator training, and breastfeeding educator training. The program also plans to support Springfield community members in obtaining doula certification.



### AWARDEE SPOTLIGHT

Baystate staff and the Springfield Family Doulas are committed to engaging with the Springfield community by participating in community events, such as the Springfield Community Baby Shower, to raise awareness of doula care and surveying community organizations working with the Black birthing population to identify unmet patient support needs.

*“We talk with patients through birth related procedures in a clear, calm, and nurturing way. We provide emotional reassurance, comfort, and encouragement...This helps build [a] relationship, trust, and security which helps decrease any anxiety and fear the pregnant person may feel.”*

– **SPRINGFIELD  
FAMILY DOULAS**



### ABOUT HPC

The Massachusetts Health Policy Commission (HPC) is an independent state agency charged with monitoring health care spending growth in Massachusetts and providing data-driven policy recommendations regarding health care delivery and payment system reform. The HPC’s mission is to advance a more transparent, accountable, and equitable health care system through its independent policy leadership and innovative investment programs. The HPC’s goal is better health and better care – at a lower cost – for all residents across the Commonwealth.

# BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

## BIRTH EQUITY AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE INCLUSION OF DOULA EXPERTISE (BESIDE) INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Program Launched on November 1, 2021



**\$196,924**  
AWARD AMOUNT

Boston Medical Center (BMC) is building upon the existing [Birth Sisters Program](#) to expand doula services for Black birthing people.



### TARGET POPULATION

Black birthing people who meet high-risk criteria (e.g., social isolation, depression or anxiety, teen pregnancy, history of trauma, housing insecurity)



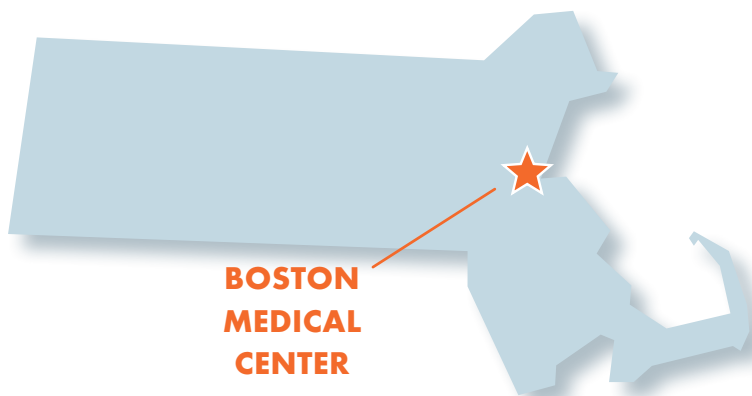
### NEW VS. EXPANSION

The BESIDE funding supports the expansion of the existing Birth Sisters Program by increasing the number of Black birthing people served, the number of prenatal and postpartum visits offered per patient, and the number of Birth Sisters employed by BMC.<sup>1</sup>



### EMPLOYED VS. CONTRACTED

Birth Sisters are employed by Boston Medical Center.



**BOSTON  
MEDICAL  
CENTER**

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1. Boston Medical Center staff use the title "Birth Sisters" to refer to individuals serving as doulas through the Birth Sisters Program.

# BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

## BIRTH EQUITY AND SUPPORT THROUGH THE INCLUSION OF DOULA EXPERTISE (BESIDE) INVESTMENT PROGRAM



### SUPPORTING THE DOULA WORKFORCE

Program staff support Birth Sisters by creating opportunities to increase their visibility and stature within BMC, including participation in quality improvement initiatives in the OB/GYN department and the Birth Sisters supervisor joining meetings in the Department of Maternal Health Equity.



### AWARDEE SPOTLIGHT

Maternity service leaders formed a committee to design systems for reporting incidences of bias in patient care or in interactions between Birth Sisters and clinicians. A Program Advisory Committee, which includes Birth Sisters and patients, ensures the program is responsive to the needs of patients and doulas.

“A doula can reduce stress, create a calm and welcoming environment for Black families... by holding the space and witnessing the experience of the birth, we can create a sense of safety.”

– BOSTON  
MEDICAL CENTER  
BIRTH SISTER



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