



September 22, 2020

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

Our community has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. In Franklin County, too many babies do not reach their first birthdays. CelebrateOne is the collective community impact initiative created to address Columbus and Franklin County's unacceptably high infant mortality rate. Our focus is on providing resources to support mothers and infants to ensure every child born in our community has the opportunity to thrive. We are committed to the mothers and infants in our community. The coalition that is CelebrateOne, comprised of Columbus Public Health, the Central Ohio Hospital Council, and over 100 faith and community-based organizations is focused on reducing the infant mortality rate by 40% and cutting the racial disparity rate in half by the end of 2020.

I am writing to share the considerable impact doulas have on our moms in Columbus and Franklin County. Doula care is among the most promising approaches to combating disparities in maternal health. Women receiving doula care have been found to have improved health outcomes for both themselves and their infants, including higher breastfeeding initiation rates, fewer low-birth weight babies, and lower rates of cesarean sections. Doulas can also help reduce the impacts of racism and racial bias in health care on pregnant women of color by providing individually tailored, culturally appropriate, and patient centered care and advocacy.

Additionally, the peer-to-peer support provides mom prenatal and postpartum resources and referrals, answers to questions about labor and birth, emotional support, fosters positive communication with doctors, midwives and nurses, helps women advocate for themselves and Medicaid insurance coverage for doula services would eliminate cost barriers all of which can decrease stress during pregnancy, a factor that impacts prematurity which is the leading cause of infant mortality. Doula services have been an effective resource for the moms and families we serve and will improve birth outcomes in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Priyam Chokshi".

Priyam Chokshi
Director of Community and Legislative Strategies
CelebrateOne

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CelebrateOne Partners

Columbus Public Health Central Ohio Hospital Council Columbus Department of Development Franklin County Board of Commissioners Franklin County Families and Children First Council Ohio Department of Medicaid Columbus City Council Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services Ohio Better Birth Outcomes Collaborative Moms2B Physicians CareConnection PrimaryOne Health