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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jamaa Birth Village and Uzazi Village advocate for Missouri Medicaid Doula Reimbursement via the Missouri Community Doula Council

The Missouri Community Doula Council (MCDC) is a Missouri entity co-fiscally sponsored by Jamaa Birth Village and Uzazi Village-created by long-term doula advocates, activists, trainers, and organizational innovators, pioneers and leaders, Okunsola M. Amadou and Hakima Payne. MCDC is Missouri's premier doula credentialing entity, providing both state and nationwide support and services to doulas & doula agencies. Formally established in 2021, MCDC pioneered Missouri's 1st Managed Care Company doula reimbursement pilot in 2016 and joined the 2nd doula reimbursement pilot in 2021. MCDC leaders have been actively on the ground leading discussions and actions concerning Doula Medicaid reimbursement for 7-years, and actively works with community doulas, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, MO HealthNet, MCO's and state legislators on Missouri Medicaid doula reimbursement. In 2022 MCDC was joined by additional community doula organizers and leaders, legislators and advocates across Missouri who are also passionate about expecting and postpartum Missouri families, doulas and doula care coverage. MCDC's goal is to have Doula coverage & reimbursement fully enacted by December 2024.

What services do MCDC offer and why is this such a big deal?

The Missouri Community Doula Council is made up of regional doula leaders across the state of Missouri to be representatives of its respective communities and to advance the doula profession in Missouri as a whole. This is the first time in history that Community Based Doula Organizations across the state have banded together to support Missouri families and doulas to better birthing outcomes. MCDC's primary responsibilities are to:

1. Credential certified doulas and to assist them with Missouri Medicaid and MCO reimbursement for doula care services for equitable pay. Doulas have the capacity to increase the likelihood of both mothers and babies surviving and thriving in childbirth and deserve to be paid an equitable wage, now.
2. Process billing for doulas and provide education & training for doulas who'd like to self-bill, increasing economic growth for Missouri doulas.
3. Provide a statewide doula directory for pregnant and postpartum families across Missouri-highlighting doulas who are reimbursable by MCOs and Medicaid, including doulas who accept private insurance and self-pay. This ensures community doulas can be found by families who need them.
4. Provide continuing and bridge education for cultural congruence allowing doulas to maintain advanced and life saving skills.
5. Advocate for Policy and legislative changes that advocate for equitable pay for doulas, doula coverage for Missouri families, and systems change to elevate access to doulas. This allows community doulas to speak for themselves and advocate for policies that impact them vs. policy makers and leaders who are not doulas creating policies that can potentially have negative unintentional impacts.

While MCDC has faced challenges, MCDC has soared as Missouri's leading doula credentialing entity, pushing back against inequities caused by white led entities, opening pathways to educate these entities wishing to enter the Missouri community doula space-on the best ways to support, invest in and uplift doulas, doula care & training pioneers and leaders- who trailblazed the Missouri community doula movement. MCDC

does not want to be the only one doing this work and holds values that welcomes culturally responsive key stakeholders across our nation to assist the state of Missouri in advancing the doula profession and coverage for families.

MCDC is excited to offer much needed services to diverse communities across the state, and stand firmly, committed to not allow the historical trend of white-saviorism to disrupt, co-opt and capitalize off of community based work under the guise of “help”. We welcome you to learn more about MCDC’s pioneering work and join the change.

MCDC is supported locally and nationally by Black Mamas Matter Alliance, The Atlanta Doula Collective, The Mid Mo Black Doula Collective, Elephant Circle, BJC Hospital & the Community Health Improvement Initiative, Reale Justice Network, Sister Song, Southern Birth Justice Network, National Black Midwives Alliance and the City of St. Louis Department of Health.

Doula trainers and maternal health continuing education providers can email contact@missouricommunitydoulacouncil.com to have their training, workshops and classes listed. Doulas who would like to credential for Missouri Managed Care reimbursement and join the doula directory can visit the Missouri Community Doula Council website: missouricommunitydoulacouncil.com.

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About Jamaa Birth Village

Jamaa Birth Village is a 501c3 non-profit Maternal Health organization located in Ferguson, Missouri serving the greater St. Louis metro area. Jamaa Birth Village is known for spearheading the St. Louis Black Doula & Black Midwifery movement. Jamaa Birth Village is committed to advancing community based maternal health care and transforming the maternal health systems in Missouri.

About Uzazi Village

Uzazi Village is nonprofit located in Kansas City, MO, dedicated to decreasing maternal and infant health inequity among Black and Brown communities. Their vision is for every family a healthy baby, for every baby, a healthy village.

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MCDC firmly believes:

Every family has a right to have access to doulas and coverage for services.

Every future doula has a right to choose the doula training entity to train and certify through.

Every doula has a right to choose to certify or not to certify after completing a training.

Every doula has a right to choose to provide care as an independent-private practice doula or to work with a doula collective, or for a doula agency.

Every doula has a right to access education and training advancing their skill to self-bill for private and state Medicaid/MCO coverage and reimbursement for doula services.

Every doula has a right to choose to be credentialed through any entity and to have that entity process private insurance and/or state Medicaid/ MCO billing on their behalf.

Every doula has a right to choose not to enroll in state Medicaid or private insurance reimbursement and to opt for self-pay options only.

Every doula has a right to choose if they'd like to be a part of a local, statewide and/or National doula registry or directory.