The Swedish Hospital doulas attended over 200 more births in 2017 as compared to the year before, continuing to forward the program’s three goals:

| Enhance families' birth experience by increasing the use of doula services | Integrate doulas more cohesively into the maternity care model | Elevate the doula profession through strong compensation and professional development |

Swedish doula services are administered by a dyad of two managers, an Operations Coordinator, and 52 doulas who held contracts with Swedish in 2017.

“Having a doula in the room to act as a support person for myself and my husband was priceless. My doula was there every step of the way offering suggestions on coping and making sure that I had a voice during the labor. Her demeanor, professionalism, and sense of humor carried me through the most emotional and overwhelming experience of my life.”
– L.F., Patient

“[My doula] made me so much more comfortable during my long wait to delivery. Having her there also supported my husband. I was so grateful for her massages during labor and my c-section. She coached me during labor and definitely helped me stay calm during the surgery.”
– S. B., Patient

4.8 out of 5 overall patient satisfaction

589 births attended by Swedish doulas in 2017

84% of patients say their experience with the Swedish Doula Services makes them more likely to recommend Swedish hospital to other expecting parents.
Medical providers commend the contributions of the doulas

"I love the program and think it is a great asset to our laboring women! Thank you for providing this.”
– Labor & Delivery Nurse

"[The doula] was a wonderful support. Her Spanish language skills were especially helpful.”
– Physician

"[The doula] was an instrumental part of this patient’s successful first vaginal delivery. I hope to work with her again.”
– Physician

98% of nurses and providers want to work with the Swedish doula again
98% of doctors, midwives, and nurses say the doula had a positive impact on the patient’s experience

Our data continues to be consistent with studies showing that the presence of a doula results in: reduced need for Cesarean section, fewer requests for pain management and epidurals, and higher satisfaction with the labor experience regardless of birth outcomes.

In January 2017 the Swedish Doula Program began offering free services to low-income patients in addition to paying clients.

This year, we served 82 low-income patients at no cost to the family. The doulas are still compensated.

"Honestly, I thought doulas were for rich people, someone who could afford another person there. [Having a doula] was super supportive and comforting...she knew what I wanted or needed.”
– Lucy King, Patient, recipient of free doula services

87% people of color

■ 44% Latina, ■ 31% African American,
■ 10% Asian, ■ 3% Native American, ■ 13% White

71% spoke a primary language other than English

The doulas speak a total of 10 languages including: Spanish, French, Hungarian, Polish, Russian, German, Portuguese, Somali, and Swahili.

69% immigrants or refugees

Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Laos, Mexico, Somalia, and Vietnam

Our subsidized doula services are important to promoting racial equity in access to doula care; our paying clients are 82% white.
The doulas contracted with Swedish express high levels of satisfaction

Swedish conducted an anonymous survey of the doulas contracted with the hospital to assess the impact that joining the team had on their practice:

60% of the doulas said their monthly income increased by $500 or more since joining the program

75% of the doulas stated that the number of clients they are interviewing with each month increased after contracting with Swedish

90% of the doulas felt integrated as part of the care team within Swedish Hospital as a doula in the Swedish Doula Program

“I feel like since the program began that I’ve been taken more seriously/respected by many of the staff at Swedish than I was before and have felt much more included in the care of my client, especially in cases of c-section.”

– Swedish Hospital Doula

Doula Diversity Scholarship

Swedish awarded 6 scholarships for doula training and certification in 2017 through its Doula Diversity Scholarship. The scholarship was initiated by doulas on the Swedish team to support the development and entry of more doulas of color, LBGTQ doulas, and doulas from other underrepresented groups into the doula profession. Two recipients of the scholarship – one bilingual in Spanish & English, and one trilingual in Somali, Swahili, and English - were hired onto the team as contracted doulas after completing their training.

The most recent recipient is originally from Taiwan and currently works as a Mandarin interpreter in health care settings, including at Swedish. She says,

“In becoming a doula, I will have the privilege to expand my services directly to mothers and their families.”

– Swedish Doula Diversity Scholarship Recipient

Looking Ahead...

Recognizing how challenging early parenthood can be once families return home with a new baby, Swedish is developing plans for adding postpartum doula services to its offerings.

In addition, Swedish launched a pilot program to provide doula services specifically for families whose baby dies before, during, or shortly after birth. The doula will support the family leading up to, during, and after the delivery, and up to one year after the baby’s death.

Twelve of the doulas on the Swedish doula team are engaged in this new service line, paid for by the Swedish Foundation.