

1 H.79

2 Introduced by Representative Cordes of Bristol

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Professions and occupations; community-based perinatal doulas;  
6 certification

7 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to establish a  
8 process of voluntary certification for community-based perinatal doulas.

9 An act relating to certification of community-based perinatal doulas

10 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

11 Sec. 1. 26 V.S.A. chapter 84 is added to read:

12 CHAPTER 84. COMMUNITY-BASED PERINATAL DOULAS

13 § 4171. DEFINITIONS

14 As used in this chapter:

15 (1) “Certified community-based perinatal doula” means a community-  
16 based perinatal doula who holds a certificate issued pursuant to this chapter.

17 (2) “Community-based doula” means an individual who provides doula  
18 services to under-resourced and marginalized populations at low or no cost,  
19 often through a community-based agency.

1           (3) “Community-based perinatal doula” means a community-based  
2           doula who provides doula services to individuals during the perinatal period.

3           (4) “Director” means the Director of the Office of Professional  
4           Regulation.

5           (5) “Doula” means a nonclinical, nonmedical individual who provides  
6           direct emotional and physical support and educational and informational  
7           services to birthing individuals before, during, and after labor and childbirth.

8           (6) “Perinatal” means the period of time encompassing pregnancy,  
9           childbirth, and up to one year postpartum.

10           § 4172. PROHIBITIONS; PENALTIES

11           (a) Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit the provision of  
12           doula services by a noncertified individual, provided that no person shall use in  
13           connection with the person’s name any letters, words, or insignia indicating or  
14           implying that the person is a State certified community-based perinatal doula  
15           unless the person is certified in accordance with this chapter.

16           (b) A person who violates this section shall be subject to the penalties set  
17           forth in 3 V.S.A. § 127(c).

18           § 4173. DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

19           (a) The Director shall:

20           (1) provide general information to applicants for certification as certified  
21           community-based perinatal doulas;

1           (2) receive applicants for certification; grant and renew certifications in  
2           accordance with this chapter; and deny, revoke, suspend, reinstate, or condition  
3           certifications as directed by an administrative law officer;

4           (3) explain appeal procedures to certified community-based perinatal  
5           doulas and applicants;

6           (4) explain complaint procedures to the public;

7           (5) prepare and maintain a registry of certified community-based  
8           perinatal doulas;

9           (6) administer fees collected in accordance with this chapter and  
10          3 V.S.A. § 125; and

11          (7) refer all disciplinary matters to an administrative law officer  
12          established under 3 V.S.A. § 129(j).

13          (b) The Director, after consultation with the advisor appointees, may adopt  
14          rules in accordance with 3 V.S.A. chapter 25 as needed to perform the  
15          Director's duties under this chapter.

16          § 4174. ADVISOR APPOINTEES

17          (a) The Secretary of State shall appoint two certified community-based  
18          perinatal doulas to serve as advisors in matters relating to community-based  
19          perinatal doulas. The advisors shall be appointed as set forth in 3 V.S.A.  
20          § 129b and serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. One of the initial  
21          appointments may be for less than a full term. Appointees shall not have less

1 than three years' experience providing community-based perinatal doula  
2 services immediately preceding appointment and shall be actively engaged in  
3 delivering community-based perinatal doula services in Vermont during  
4 incumbency.

5 (b) The Director shall seek the advice of the community-based perinatal  
6 doula advisors in carrying out the provisions of this chapter. The advisor  
7 appointees shall be entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of  
8 expenses as permitted under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for attendance at any meeting  
9 called by the Director for this purpose.

10 § 4175. ELIGIBILITY

11 To be eligible for certification as a certified community-based perinatal  
12 doula, an applicant shall complete and submit an application in the manner  
13 prescribed by the Director by rule, accompanied by the applicable fees, and  
14 evidence satisfactory to the Director that the applicant:

15 (1) is at least 18 years of age;

16 (2) has sufficient and appropriate competencies in community-based  
17 perinatal doula services, whether acquired through experience, mentorship,  
18 training, formal education, or a combination of these, as determined by the  
19 Director by rule; and

20 (3) has passed any criminal history background or registry checks  
21 required by the Director by rule.

1     § 4176. CERTIFICATE RENEWAL

2         A community-based perinatal doula certification shall be renewed every  
3     two years upon application, payment of the required fee in accordance with  
4     3 V.S.A. § 125, and proof of compliance with any continuing education or  
5     demonstrated competency requirements established by rule.

6     § 4177. UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

7         (a) Unprofessional conduct means misusing a title in professional activity  
8     and any of the conduct listed in 3 V.S.A. § 129a, whether committed by a  
9     certified community-based perinatal doula or an applicant.

10        (b) The Office of Professional Regulation may discipline a certified  
11     community-based perinatal doula for unprofessional conduct as provided in  
12     3 V.S.A. § 129a.

13     Sec. 2. 3 V.S.A. § 122 is amended to read:

14     § 122. OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

15        The Office of Professional Regulation is created within the Office of the  
16     Secretary of State. The Office shall have a director who shall be qualified by  
17     education and professional experience to perform the duties of the position.  
18     The Director of the Office of Professional Regulation shall be a classified  
19     position with the Office of the Secretary of State. The following boards or  
20     professions are attached to the Office of Professional Regulation:

21                                     \* \* \*

1           (54) Community-Based Perinatal Doulas

2       Sec. 3. 3 V.S.A. § 123(j) is amended to read:

3           (j)(1) The Office may inquire into the criminal background histories of  
4       applicants for initial licensure and for license renewal of any Office-issued  
5       credential, including a license, certification, registration, or specialty  
6       designation for the following professions:

7                                 \* \* \*

8           (M) occupational therapists licensed under 26 V.S.A. chapter 71; ~~and~~

9           (N) peer providers and peer recovery support specialists certified  
10       under 26 V.S.A. chapter 60; and

11           (O) community-based perinatal doulas certified under 26 V.S.A.  
12       chapter 84.

13                                 \* \* \*

14       Sec. 4. 3 V.S.A. § 125 is amended to read:

15       § 125. FEES

16                                 \* \* \*

17           (b) Unless otherwise provided by law, the following fees shall apply to all  
18       professions regulated by the Director in consultation with advisor appointees  
19       under Title 26:

20                                 \* \* \*

1 (2) Application for licensure or certification, \$115.00, except application  
2 for:

3 \* \* \*

4 (R) Community-based perinatal doula, \$75.00.

5 \* \* \*

6 (4) Biennial renewal, \$275.00, except biennial renewal for:

7 \* \* \*

8 (W) Community-based perinatal doula, \$120.00.

9 \* \* \*

10 Sec. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE

11 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2026, provided that the Director of the  
12 Office of Professional Regulation shall commence the rulemaking process  
13 prior to that date in order to ensure that the rules will be in effect on July 1,  
14 2026.