

Deacon Doulas: A Hospital Based Volunteer Doula Program at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

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School of Medicine

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PROJECT GOALS

The Deacon Doula Program is a brand new initiative launched to offer compassionate physical and emotional support during childbirth for patients of Wake Forest Baptist Health. At the core of the program is a belief in patient-centered care and a commitment to facilitating empowered birth experiences. Deacon Doulas are volunteers allowing them to serve vulnerable populations of the greater Winston-Salem community by removing the socioeconomic status barrier to receiving doula care. This project is modeled after the Birth Partners program at UNC Chapel Hill Women's Hospital.

RESULTS

**Volunteer Doula Program
established to provide free
doula support
Trained 24 Volunteer Doulas
22 Patients Served
405 Hours of Service to date**

From December 2019 - February 2020 volunteers served a total of **405 hours**. We were able to provide labor support to **22 patients**. In March 2020, the program was suspended due to COVID-19.

Reflections from Volunteers



"For me, becoming a doula allowed me to realize how passionate I am about patient care and working with mothers during this formative experience in her and her child's life. I have gained both practical skills and emotional training that will aid me in my future health care career aspirations. This has been a priceless experience and I am so grateful to have the opportunity to work with such amazing individuals."

"I have really enjoyed being a doula so far! The birthing process is so incredible and being a support during it is such a special experience."

"Deacon Doulas has exposed me to an amazing network of volunteer doulas and wonderful families! Through this, I have gained a better understanding of the difference in experiences in labor and delivery and how we can advocate for better treatment. This has inspired me to choose a career in the medical field that educates women and families on their options with birth and their bodies in general!"

SUSTAINABILITY

With the COVID-19 crisis, volunteer programs in the hospital were suspended. Deacon Doulas looks forward to serving more patients as soon as it is safe for both doula and patients!

The next phase will be "re-launching" the program, and partnering with community doula organizations to train more volunteers through a new in-house doula training curriculum.

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