BirthWell Partners is a non-profit that makes doula training and doula services more equitable and accessible, in order to improve the health of families and communities in Central Alabama.

Our vision is for every birthing person to feel respected, empowered, and supported throughout the experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early weeks of parenting.

Mission and Vision:

BirthWell Doulas attended 66 births this year: 55 in-person and 11 virtually, when COVID-19 led to restricted visitor policies at some area hospitals. Our doulas have been responsive to the changing needs and policies, “keeping calm and doula-ing online!”

- 98.2% of BirthWell clients initiated breastfeeding compared to 75.7% of babies born in Jeff Co. in 2015 (most recent available data).
- 96.2% of clients held their babies skin to skin in the first hours after birth (skin to skin helps babies regulate body temperature, respiration, and heart rate, as well as promoting bonding and breastfeeding).

The last quarter of 2019-2020 provided us with a unique opportunity to assess our programs and consider how to provide our services in a way that continues to support the needs of pregnant clients and aspiring doulas.

After nine years of providing services, we draw inspiration from the words of Dr. Neel Shah.

Birth is not a transient event that affects only a few in our society. Birth is the foundational episode in EACH of our lives. Therefore, we ALL should invest in making that process as safe, supported, and respected as possible.

As we enter a new fiscal year, we would like to share our new Mission and Vision statements.
BirthWell Doulas are continuing to make a difference for families in Central Alabama. 55 births were attended in-person, and an additional 11 were attended virtually. Services were provided by our work study doulas, doulas who volunteered after attending our training, and contract doulas we were able to hire, thanks to grants from the Jefferson County Department of Health and the Independent Presbyterian Church.

All doulas working with BirthWell Partners provide one-on-one support to birthing people. The process begins during pregnancy by building trust, learning each pregnant person’s goals and connecting them to additional community resources. During labor and birth, doulas offer encouragement, comforting physical touch, help with breastfeeding, and more. Afterwards, they check in with clients, answer questions about breastfeeding, and continue to provide referrals to other agencies.

### Selected Outcomes

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-Section Rate</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
<td>22.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>VBAC Rate</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preterm Birth Rate</td>
<td>10.02%</td>
<td>12.48%</td>
<td>3.08%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Birth Weight</td>
<td>8.28%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*“My doula was an awesome support person to have during labor and birth. She brought lights, massaged me, we danced, exercised, walked, used water therapy, played music and she talked me through the tough parts...she was there through everything!”*

If you would like to see program outcomes for each calendar year, they can be found on our website: [http://www.birthwellpartners.org/about-birthwell/program-outcomes/](http://www.birthwellpartners.org/about-birthwell/program-outcomes/).
BirthWell Partners trained a record 51 new doulas this year! We welcomed 9 people on work-study who are providing services to our clients as part of their work-study commitment. We strive to offer a training that goes above and beyond preparing people to work with private clients. Extra time is taken to draw attention to the serious problem of health disparities, and to encourage doulas to become part of the solution through advocacy and service. An additional 18 workshop attendees are volunteering services to our clients as they start their doula practices, and several doulas who traveled to Birmingham to attend our training, are committed to improving outcomes for the families in their home communities.

As you can see from the photos above, training in June looked a bit different from previous trainings! The bulk of the training was virtual, but thanks to the N.E. Miles Jewish Day School, we were able to divide into two smaller groups and meet at the start and finish of the workshop for some in-person learning. Participants masked and buddied up to practice hands-on comfort skills.

Information about upcoming doula trainings and work-study applications can be found here: [http://www.birthwellpartners.org/doula-training/](http://www.birthwellpartners.org/doula-training/)

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The “Earthly Birthy Fair and Family Wellness Expo” is our annual fundraising and educational outreach event. Held February 22th at the Innovation Depot, families had an opportunity to speak with a variety of wholistic service and product vendors. We would like to especially thank Cecilia Pearson (Babypalooza Magazine) for her assistance with location and event marketing, and Vikki Chavis for coordinating the event.

Want to help us serve more families?
Make a secure donation on our web site!

www.BirthWellPartners.org