

August 7, 2024

Ms. Hannah Lascano  
Sr. Program Associate for Quality & Operations  
Association for Community Affiliated Plans  
1155 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Hannah:

As a mother of five, a licensed doula, and a community health worker, **Quatia (“Q”) Osorio** knows the challenges Black and brown mothers face amid a medical system that can fail to serve their needs. She is deeply passionate and gives her whole self to everything she does. As you will read, she has made it her life’s commitment to support mothers and children and make notable advancements in the community. I immediately thought of Quatia as a nominee when you issued a call for nominations for your esteemed **Supporting the Safety Net award**.

Quatia, Doula, is a native of Rhode Island. She is a Bryant University graduate in Business Management and a Jefferson University graduate in Health Services Management. She is enrolled right now at the National School of Midwifery, pursuing her degree. She is a certified community health worker, certified lactation counselor, community birth and postpartum doula, maternal child health specialist, maternal certified community health worker, certified perinatal educator, and certified health coach.

Driven to build a more equitable healthcare system, Q always considers the long-term impact of her work on the community. She was a significant force in creating and passing the Rhode Island Doula Reimbursement Act of 2021, mandating Rhode Island-based public and private insurance to cover doula services. She also helped establish equitable Certified Perinatal Doula (CPD) certification standards in collaboration with other workforce professionals, the Rhode Island Certifying Board, and Doulas of Rhode Island.

In addition to being a strong advocate, she built the Urban Perinatal Education Center (UPEC), offering pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and newborn care classes in both English and Spanish. Q is a Founding Director of the Rhode Island Birth Worker Cooperative, a doula-owned and led shared billing cooperative to navigate doulas through the insurance reimbursement process; Rhode Island Perinatal Doula Agency, the first MCO-based doula agency in the state.

In 2022, Q opened UPEC in Pawtucket – the first Black and BIPOC maternal medical home for perinatal education and services. There, she opened the Easy Access Clinic for episodic care prenatally and postpartum, using a traditional midwifery care model for episodic gap care weeks four to 11 in early pregnancy. The organization created and now runs the doula referral hotline to connect families, agencies, and providers with a Black and BIPOC doula.

Her most recent endeavors include promoting the expansion of the Certified Community Health Worker specialty for Perinatal Mental Health Specialist Advocates with the Rhode Island Certification Board, which concludes at the end of the year, and the recent passage of the Certified Lactation Counselor Licensure Act of 2024. This act includes Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC) in Rhode Island Department of Health licensure in the hope of insurance coverage to promote lactation professional education and services to all families, along with an appropriate compensation to counselors.

In addition to her many contributions, she is working to implement the 2023 HRSA Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA State Maternal Health Innovative Grant by building out the Certified Professional Midwifery Equity Initiative to promote community-based practitioners as Licensed Midwives through a collaborative satellite hybrid accredited school. This initiative is the first of its kind in creating pathways and partnerships to meet the practitioner shortage gap, specifically in perinatal and women's health. She also began her journey as a Midwifery student with a student clinical position at Agrotterra Midwifery in East Providence and continues to provide care alongside her preceptor.

She is the Founder of *Our Journ3i*, a perinatal community-led, based wellness center focusing on eliminating health determinants of communities of color through maternal support, education, advocacy, and awareness.

Notably, Q is keenly focused on being a mentor to the next generation of doulas and healthcare advocates. She understands the importance of using her platform and position and truly inspires all those around her. We have partnered with Q on several occasions particularly those that help grow the doula network across the state. Neighborhood's team plans to continue to actively participate in conferences and forums together to expand our learning and pursue health equity.

When she is not providing care, training professionals, presenting, serving on various committees, building systems of equity, or hosting conferences and workshops, you can find her working at one of her two USDA-registered urban farms, growing food for the community.

On behalf of the entire Neighborhood family, please accept this letter as an enthusiastic nomination of this amazing maternal health advocate Quatia ("Q") Osorio for your ACAP 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Supporting the Safety Net Award.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions about this nomination.

Sincerely,



Peter Marino

President & CEO

Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island