No. HFW-H/NHM/Standard Treatment Guidelines/2010
National Health Mission
Himachal Pradesh

To,

1. All the Chief Medical Officers,
   Himachal Pradesh
2. The Medical Superintendents,
   RH Bilaspur/ RH Chamba/ RH Hamirpur/
   ZH Dharamshala/ RH Kullu/ ZH Mandi/
   ZH Shimla/ RH Nahan/ RH Solan/ RH Una/
   CH Rohru/ MGMSC Khaneri, Shimla
3. The Medical Superintendent,
   KNH/IGMC, Shimla / Dr. YS Parmar Med. College, Nahan/
   Dr.RPGMC, Tanda/RGRAH, Paprola, Kangra
   Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru Govt.Med. College, Chamba/
   Sh. Lal Bahadur Shastri Govt. Med. College, Mandi

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES
17 OCT 2017
KASUMPTI, SHIMLA - 9

Dated Shimla-9, the

Subject: Advisory/guidelines for Birth Companion Programme.

Sir,

Birth Companions are women who have undergone the process of labour and provide continuous one-to-one support to other women experiencing labour and child birth.

WHO promotes labour companionship as a core element of care for improving maternal and infant health (WHO 2002). Global evidence suugests that a birth companion plays a major role in giving emotional support to the pregnant woman during and after the delivery which helps in maintaining the normal hormonal flow in the pregnant woman. The continuous support of the birth companion leads to slightly shorter labour, greater likelihood of spontaneous vaginal birth and reduced need for intrapartum analgesia. In addition, women who receive continous support are less likely to report dissatisfaction with their childbirth experience. The experiences of Tamilnadu and Gujurat shared in the year 2015 have been encourging. The experience shows that the birth companion initiative was especially helpful in reducing grievances of pregnant women and their families, reduction of medicolegal cases and in providng emotional support to the women during delivery.

Keeping in view the various benefits, it has been decided that the Birth Companion initiative would be implemented in the state and monitored on regular basis. The procedure for selction and pre-requisite for Birth Companions are as under:

Procedures for Selection and Management of Birth Companions

1. During the first ante-natal care (ANC) visit, expectant mothers shall be informed of the birth companion policy and shall be encouraged to provide the name and contact information of their birth companion at the next ANC visit.
2. ANMs providing ANC shall document on the ANC record the name and contact information of the birth companion.
3. Birth companions shall be encouraged to accompany expectant mothers during subsequent ANC visits.
4. Birth Companions shall be trained on their role during labour, delivery and childbirth at a date and time agreed withthe healthcare providers. A minimum of two sessions shall be provided (one theoretical and one site visit) to the hospital where the delivery shall occur.
5. Birth Companions shall be allowed to remain beside the expectant mother during labour and delivery in the maternity ward.
6. Births attended with companion at birth shall be documented in the medical record.
7. Birth Companion will be educated not to interfere in medical procedures.
8. Birth Companion must be woman who herself is a mother.

Pre-requisite for a Birth Companion

1. The birth companion has to be a female relative and preferably one who has undergone the process of labour.
2. In facilities where privacy protocols are followed in the labour room, the husband of the pregnant woman can be allowed as a birth companion.
3. She should not suffer from any communicable diseases.
4. She should wear clean clothes.
5. She should be willing to stay with the pregnant woman throughout the process of labour.
6. She should not interfere in the work of hospital staff and the treatment procedures.
7. She should not attend to other women in the labour room.

You are requested to sensitize the concerned health functionaries regarding this initiative. The initiative would be monitor as per format attached. This format is to be made a part of the Comprehensive Reporting Format which is submitted every month to NHM State Head Quarter. The concerned district head quarter will incorporate the monthly report of the Medical College in their district while sending the report as part of Comprehensive Reporting Format.

It is hoped that these guidelines will be used optimally to update knowledge of service providers to enable them to implement this intervention successfully and at scale.

Deputy Mission Director
National Health Mission
Himachal Pradesh
Email: ddnrhmhp@gmail.com

Endst.No. HFW-H/NHM/Standard Treatment Guidelines/2010 Dated Shimla-9, the

Copy to:

1. The Principal Secretary (Health) to the Government of Himachal Pradesh for information please.
2. The Director Health Services, Himachal Pradesh for information please.
3. The Director, Ayurveda, Himachal Pradesh for information please.
4. All the Deputy Commissioners, Hiamchal Pradesh for information please.
5. The Principal, IGMC, Shimla/ Dr.RPGMC Tanda, Kangra/ RGRAH, Paprola, Kangra/ Dr. Y.S.Parmar Medical College, Nahan/ Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru Govt. Medical College, Chambal/ Sh. Lal Bahadur Shastri Govt. Medical College, Mandi for information please.
6. All the State Programme Officers, NHM for information please.
7. The SPO (IEC), NHM with the directions to prepare IEC material for Birth Companion initiative.
8. The Consultant (HMIS), NHM with the direction to upload the guidelines on NHM portal.

Deputy Mission Director
National Health Mission
Himachal Pradesh

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES
17 OCT 2017
KASUMPTI, SHIMLA - 9

Format for reporting of Birth Companion Programme for the month of _____

S.No.	District	Number of Deliveries at Public Health Facilities	Number of deliveries accompanied by Birth Companion