



The Improving Coverage and Care for Mothers Act

Why do we need the Improving Coverage and Care for Mothers Act?

The United States has the highest rate of maternal mortality among similarly wealthy countries, with [17.4 deaths per 100,000](#) live births. An estimated [50,000 women](#) each year experience severe maternal morbidity or severe complications after they leave the hospital. Black mothers are [1.7 times more likely](#) than white mothers to experience these complications.

A major barrier to a healthy pregnancy is the continued lack of access to health care for women before, during and after birth. Poor maternal care also disproportionately affects Black mothers, who are [two to three times more likely](#) to die from pregnancy complications compared to their white peers. Although Medicaid pays for almost [half](#) of all births in the United States and is a critical provider of the full spectrum of pregnancy care, strict eligibility requirements and long wait-times for appointments can prohibit women from receiving the services they need and deserve. In addition, several States constrain their Medicaid programs for pregnant women to just 60 days of eligibility following the birth of their child. While the American Rescue Plan addressed this by providing States with the option to [extend](#) Medicaid postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months through a State Plan Amendment, this provision is optional.

To decrease the risk of pregnancy-related complications, mothers should also be supported by professionals that can improve health outcomes and provide psychological support for prenatal, delivery and postpartum care. Midwives and doulas provide critical services to support mothers and their babies before, during and after childbirth, and they [help reduce](#) negative maternal and infant health outcomes. It is crucial that mothers have continuous access to coverage and care to support a healthy pregnancy and reduce the risk of complications.

What would the Improving Coverage and Care for Mothers Act do?

The Improving Coverage and Care for Mothers Act would build on the accomplishments of the American Rescue Plan to:

- Expand Medicaid so that anyone who is pregnant or one-year postpartum would automatically be eligible for the program;
- Add midwives, doulas and lactation consultants as Medicaid providers; and
- Reimburse covered services at the average rate paid by commercial insurance in each State. The federal government would also provide States with a 100 percent Federal Medical Assistance Percentage payment for the new services and coverage.

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