



An Act relative to expanding equitable access to maternal postpartum care

HD 2470 / SD 1929

Lead Sponsors: Rep. Liz Miranda and Sen. Joan Lovely

Background

Maternal mortality is a growing health crisis in the United States. While the majority of pregnancy-related deaths are preventable, they are [increasing at an alarming rate](#). Medicaid plays an important role in improving maternal and perinatal outcomes. [Timely postpartum visits](#) provide an opportunity to address chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension; mental health status, including postpartum depression; and substance use disorders. Under current federal rules, pregnant and birthing individuals who are eligible for Medicaid on the basis of their pregnancy only receive coverage during their pregnancy and 60 days postpartum. This timeframe is not sufficient to address the medical and socioemotional needs of the postpartum period.

Why is this legislation important?

- Massachusetts has expanded MassHealth to more low-income residents, including pregnant and birthing individuals. Yet, some postpartum individuals experience disruptions in coverage and care under current eligibility rules, leading to delays in identifying and treating pressing health challenges.
- For every person who dies from pregnancy-related causes, another 70 suffer from severe physical illness or disability, including behavioral health conditions.
- In Massachusetts, [MassHealth covers 35% of births](#). Medicaid-enrolled pregnant women are more likely than women with private coverage to have certain chronic conditions, preterm births or low birthweight babies, putting them at higher risk for poor maternal outcomes.
- [Pregnancy-associated mortality](#) increased 33% in Massachusetts between 2012 and 2014, the latest time period for which publicly available data is available.

Why is this a health equity issue?

- Individuals of color are more likely than white individuals to die or experience serious illness and injury due to pregnancy-related causes.
- Black birthing individuals have pregnancy-related mortality rates that are over [three times higher](#) than the rate for white birthing individuals.
- Black, Indigenous and People of Color make up a disproportionate share of Medicaid enrollees – [52.6%](#) of MassHealth members.

What does this legislation do?

This legislation would:

- Direct MassHealth to seek approval from the federal government to extend postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months.
- Sets the stage for continuous coverage during a critical time, impacting the long-term health and well-being of pregnant and birthing individuals, their families and their communities.

For more information, please contact Yaminah Romulus at Health Care For All at yromulus@hcfama.org or 617-275-2975

CHAC Member Organizations

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.
Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention
American Academy of Pediatrics MA Chapter
Association for Behavioral Healthcare
Boston Children's Hospital
Boston Medical Center
Boston Public Health Commission
Cambridge Health Alliance
Children's Law Center of Massachusetts
Children's League of Massachusetts
Children's Vision Massachusetts
Coalition for Social Justice
Codman Square Health Center
Community Catalyst
Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)
East Boston Ecumenical Community Council (EBECC)
Federation for Children with Special Needs
Franciscan Children's
Health Care For All
The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts
Health Law Advocates
Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts
The Home for Little Wanderers
Joint Committee for Children's Health Care in Everett
Massachusetts Advocates for Children
Massachusetts Coalition of School-Based Health Centers
Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium
Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers
Massachusetts Medical Society
Massachusetts Pediatric Home Nursing Care Campaign
Massachusetts School Based Health Alliance
Massachusetts School Nurse Organization, Inc.
Medical-Legal Partnership Boston
Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)
National Association of Social Workers, MA Chapter
New England Alliance for Children's Health
Parent/Professional Advocacy League
Partners HealthCare
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley