

Support Legislation Allowing Moms to Keep Medicaid Health Insurance for 12 Months After Pregnancy

The Legislation Will Support the Health of Moms and Babies

Texas should move forward with extending Medicaid coverage for mothers to 12 months postpartum, an option available to states through a simple Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA). **Extending coverage to 12 months postpartum is recommended in the Governor’s budget proposal, the Texas GOP platform, and the Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee report to the Legislature.** A full year of coverage after pregnancy ensures new mothers have access to comprehensive health coverage and medical care. One in four Texas women of childbearing age do not have health insurance (26 percent),² which Texas’ own data show contributes to maternal deaths and severe complications for postpartum women. For women who do not get health insurance through their job or their spouse, many times the only coverage option is Medicaid, which is available to low-income women while they are pregnant.

The Texas Maternal Mortality & Morbidity Review Committee found that 27 percent of maternal deaths in Texas occur between 43 days and one year after pregnancy. And the vast majority (about 90 percent) of maternal deaths are preventable.³ The burden of maternal mortality weighs heaviest on Black women, who are more than twice as likely to die of pregnancy-related causes than the average for all women, regardless of education level or other socioeconomic factors.⁴ A full year of coverage after pregnancy would prevent maternal morbidities and mortalities by allowing more Texas mothers to see a medical or mental health professional to manage medical issues and complications before they get worse — such as postpartum depression, cardiac arrest, infection, and extreme blood loss or hemorrhage.



12 WOMEN DIED PER MONTH ON AVERAGE WHILE PREGNANT OR WITHIN ONE YEAR OF PREGNANCY.

In 2020, Black women were 2x more likely to experience critical health issues –

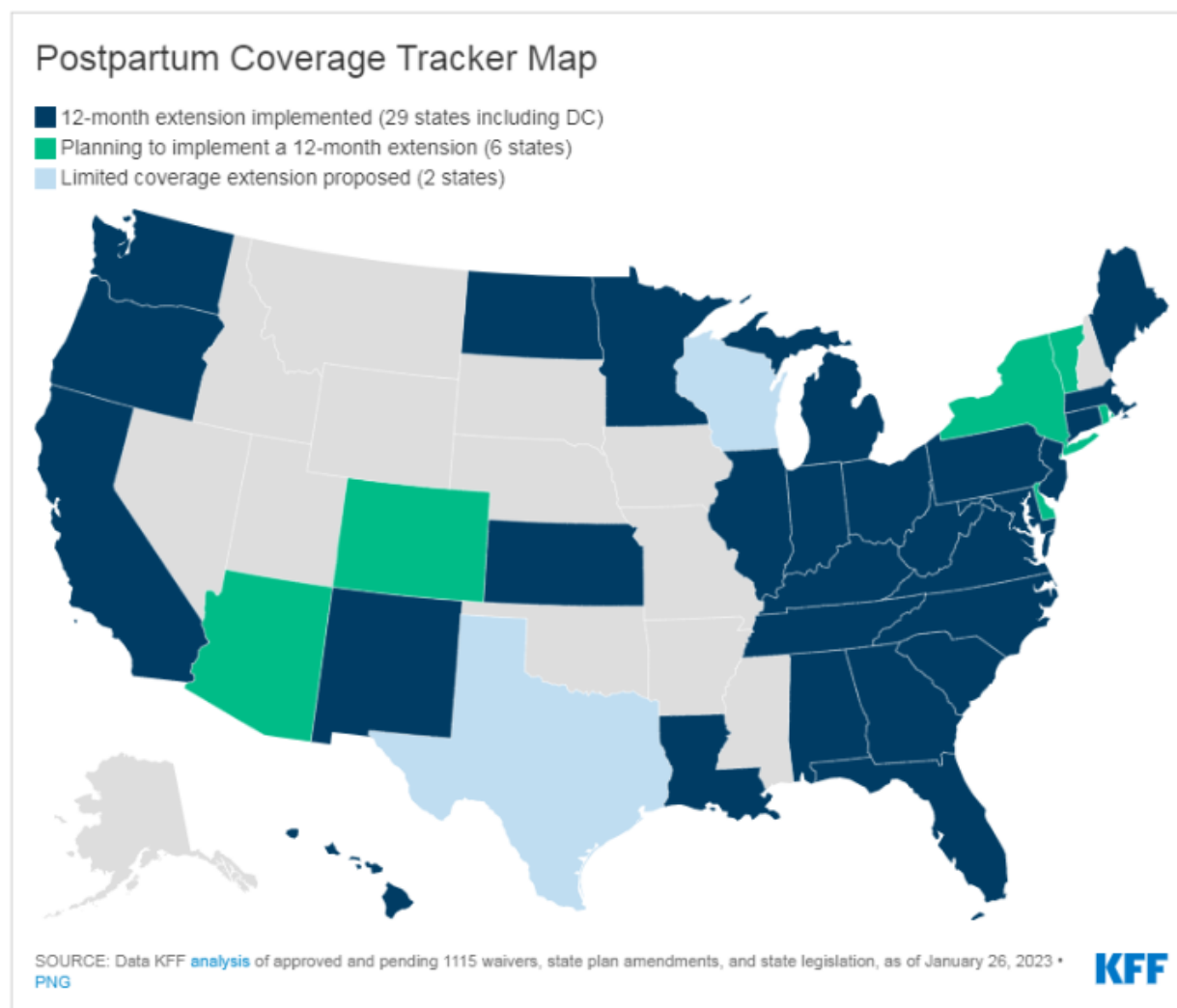
1.7x more likely to have hemorrhage-related health issues.

3.2x more likely to have preeclampsia-related health issues.

2.3x more likely to have sepsis-related health issues.

Source: Department of State Health Services. Letter from DSHS Commissioner Jennifer Shuford to Governor Greg Abbott (December 2022). Available https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/legislative/2022-Reports/Letter-to-Governor-Abbott_Infographic-Attachments.pdf.

Texas has taken a significant step by passing HB 133 (87th Regular Session), which would allow new mothers to keep Medicaid for six months postpartum rather than just two months. However, this law has not been implemented and the state landscape on postpartum coverage has changed enormously in the last two years. **In contrast to last session, 12 months postpartum coverage has been adopted in most states (35 states), including Alabama, South Carolina, Florida, Louisiana, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, and Tennessee, among others.**⁵



Endnotes

1. Nehme E, Patel D, Cortez D, Gulbas L, Lakey D. (2020) Increasing Access to Healthcare Coverage for Uninsured, Postpartum Women in Texas: A Report from the Postpartum Access to Healthcare (PATH) Project. Austin, TX: The University of Texas System/Texas Collaborative for Healthy Mothers and Babies.
2. Georgetown University Center for Children and Families. Medicaid Expansion Narrows Maternal Health Coverage Gaps, But Racial Disparities Persist (Sept. 2021).
3. Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and Department of State Health Services Joint Biennial Report. (2022). Available at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/legislative/2022-Reports/Joint-Biennial-MMMRC-Report-2022.pdf>.
4. Ibid.
5. Kaiser Family Foundation. [Medicaid Postpartum Coverage Extension Tracker](#).