

# Extend Medicaid Coverage for Pregnant Women to One Year Post-Partum

## THE ISSUE

Currently, women who qualify for Medicaid because of pregnancy are only covered up to 60 days following the birth of their child or post-partum. The 2021-2023 biennial budget approved an additional 30 days of coverage pending approval of a waiver submitted to CMS, but many mothers need care beyond this coverage window. **SB 562, championed this session by Senator Ballweg and Representative Loudenbeck, would extend coverage for a full year post-partum.**

## THE WHY

Medicaid coverage is associated with improved access to health care, less delay in obtaining health care, better self-reported health, and reductions in mortality.<sup>1</sup> Women need a range of health care services following the birth of a child, especially as many pre-existing chronic conditions such as hypertension or diabetes can worsen with pregnancy. **Women also need continued coverage to address anxiety, depression, and substance abuse that can also be exacerbated by the stresses of caring for an infant.** As maternal mortality rates in the country continue to rise, access to care and trusted relationships with providers are key to lowering and combating racial disparities in maternal and infant death in Wisconsin.

## THE DATA

- In 2020, Wisconsin Community Health Centers provided 1,015 deliveries and 3,184 pre-natal visits. 45% of Community Health Center patients are of child-bearing age, 15-44 years old.<sup>2</sup>
- **30% of maternal deaths (excluding suicide and drug overdose) occur between 43 days and 365 days following delivery.** In addition, researchers estimate 1 in 7 pregnant women experience perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, which frequently extend beyond Medicaid's current 60-day postpartum coverage period.<sup>3</sup>
- **Maternal mortality rates for Black women in Wisconsin are 5 times higher than white women and 3.2 times higher for Latino women than white women.** These are some of the worst outcomes in the nation.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 in 3 women experience a disruption in insurance coverage before, during, or after pregnancy.<sup>5</sup>

## THE SOLUTION

WPHCA urges Wisconsin policymakers to **sign on as co-sponsors of SB 562**, extending coverage for pregnant women one year post-partum, a policy that would benefit not only mothers but infants. If passed, **approximately 6,300 Wisconsin women would gain access to critical health services.**<sup>6</sup>

1. Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). *Maternal Health Atlas*. 2018.

2. Health Center Program Uniform Data System (UDS). 2019.

3. Equitable Maternal Health Coalition. *Continuing Medicaid /CHIP Postpartum Coverage*. 2020.

4. Wisconsin Maternal Mortality Review. *Recommendations Report*. 2018.

5. Hatfield, Swartz, et al. "Women In The United States Experience High Rates Of Coverage 'Churn' In Months Before And After Childbirth." 2017.

6. Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. *Post-Partum Eligibility Extension (Health Services -- Medical Assistance) Health Insurance Coverage*. 2021.