

THE WEST VIRGINIA COALITION FOR HEALTHY MOTHERS AND BABIES



ISSUES:

- West Virginia expanded Medicaid for pregnant women from 150 percent to 300 percent of the federal poverty level during the 2020 Session. Implementation on July 1, 2020 has provided health insurance coverage for many women who were previously not eligible. All West Virginia Senators voted in favor of this bill and 97 percent of the House voted in favor.

Implementation of this bill is a major step forward in protecting and promoting the health of mothers and babies. The research suggests that we will see the benefits of this expansion for generations to come.

- The next step in supporting the health of mothers and babies is to extend coverage during the postpartum period from three months to twelve months. The 2020 Legislature also introduced HB 4416 to extend Medicaid protections to 12 months postpartum.

The bill passed both the Committee on Prevention and Treatment of Substance Abuse and the Health Committee but failed in Finance.

- The new Biden Administration has signaled that it will promote extending postpartum coverage by permitting states to do so with a simple amendment to the State Medicaid Plan. Because of a high federal match, such an extension would not be costly to the state.

The Biden Administration and the Congress may even increase the federal match for the states who take advantage of it.

RECOMMENDATION:

- West Virginia should take this opportunity and direct the Department of Health and Human Resources to draft a plan amendment (SPA) to extend coverage to 12 months postpartum effective July 1, 2021.

12 MONTHS POSTPARTUM COVERAGE WILL

- Decrease maternal death rates.
- Reduce maternal complications from chronic conditions such as heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes.
- Reduce rates of maternal opiate abuse.
- Reduce rates of maternal depression and suicide.

