



# State of Alaska Department of Health

## **HB 59: Postpartum Medicaid Extension**

*Dr. Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer  
Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner*

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# Overview

HB 59: Postpartum Medicaid Extension



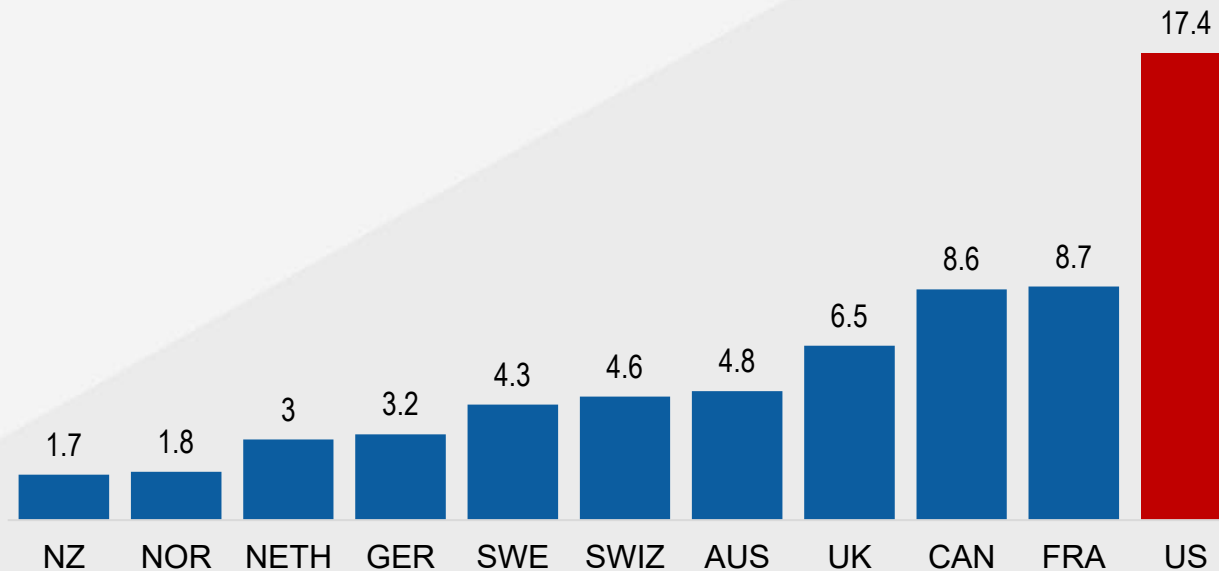
# What is Postpartum Medicaid Extension?

- HB 59 extends postpartum Medicaid coverage for new mothers from 60 days to 12 months as postpartum health issues occur far beyond 60 days
- HB 59 supports growing families and will improve Alaskan maternal and child health, setting the stage for a healthier future
- Simplified Medicaid pregnancy coverage reduces bureaucracy and stress to an young families' life
- Saves health care dollars in the long run because early interventions have the best return on investment and focuses on prevention



# What Are the Stakes?

**The United States is the only developed country where maternal mortality rates are worsening.**



**Maternal Mortality Ratios in Selected Countries  
(2018 or Latest Year)**





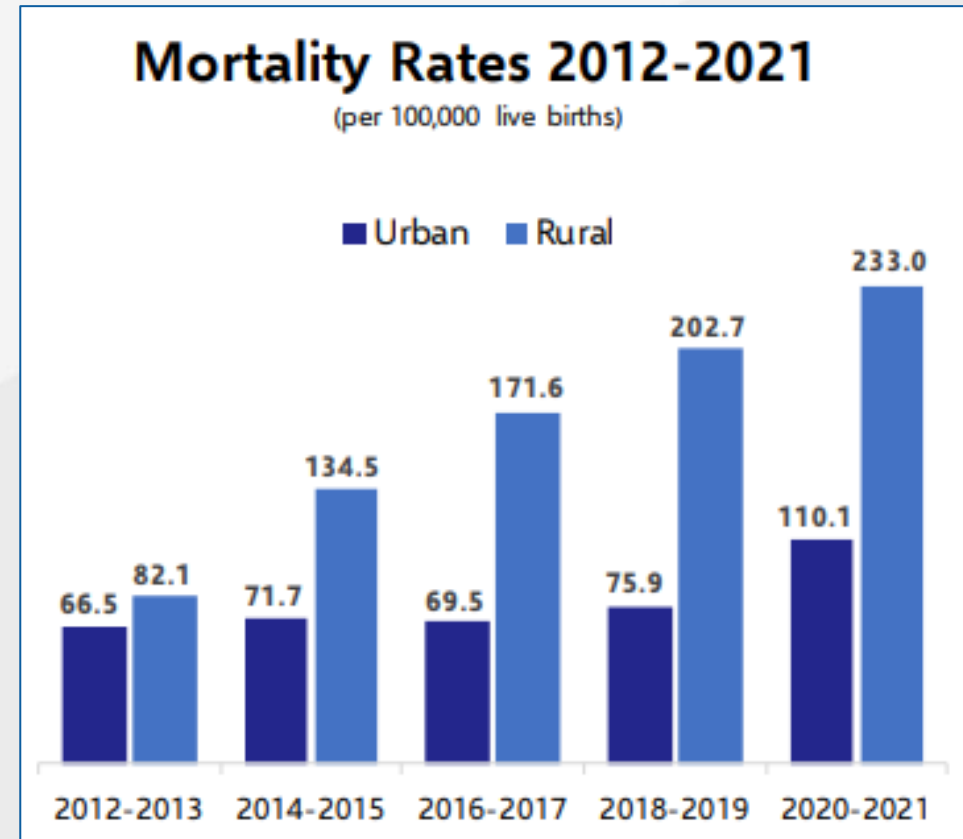
# What Are the Stakes?

- Pregnancy-related deaths occur well beyond the 60-day postpartum period
- 29% of pregnancy-related deaths in the U.S. – not including those caused by accidents, homicides, and suicides – occur 43 to 365 days postpartum
- For every pregnancy-related death, there are 70 to 80 cases of severe maternal illness and morbidity in the postpartum period
- Medicaid-enrolled women are especially vulnerable to pregnancy-related death as they are more likely to experience chronic conditions, pre-term or low-weight births, and severe maternal morbidity



# Pregnancy-Associated Deaths in Alaska

- In 2021, Alaska's overall pregnancy-associated death rate exceeded the previous 5-year average by **109%**
- Among deaths in 2015-2019: **73% occurred >6 weeks post-delivery**
- Among deaths reviewed by Alaska's Maternal and Child Death Review (MCDR) committee during 2016-2022, **88% were potentially preventable**, and **44%** were associated with **barriers to health care access**



# What Can Alaska Do About It?

**Section 9812 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) added the time-limited option for allowing states to extend postpartum coverage from the required 60 days to 12 months for eligible beneficiaries through March 1, 2027.**

**The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (CAA-2023) revised ARPA to make the optional coverage extension permanent.**



# Why a Bill?

- The Legislature must approve all optional groups for Medicaid coverage in statute AS 47.07.020
- Women who are eligible for Medicaid in Alaska based on their pregnancy currently only receive coverage for 60 days postpartum
- In Alaska, 51% of births are covered by Medicaid





# Benefits to Alaskans

- **Improves maternal health outcomes**

- Prevents gaps in health care coverage and improves health care access

- **Improves maternal mental health**

- Mental health conditions contributed to 31% of pregnancy-associated deaths in Alaska between 2014 and 2018
- 14% of Alaskan mothers who had a baby in 2020 had symptoms of postpartum depression

- **Addresses disparities in maternal health outcomes**

- Medicaid plays a vital role in addressing disparities in maternal mortality and morbidity rates
- Postpartum period is an especially vulnerable time for parents recovering from substance use disorders
- Extending postpartum coverage increases access to screening and education about chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure



# Benefits to Alaskans



## ■ Improves child health outcomes

- Parental enrollment in Medicaid is associated with a 29% higher probability that a child will receive an annual well-child visit
- Maternal mental health matters not only because of maternal mortality; it is intimately tied to the health and development of the child
- Maternal depression can lead to negative outcomes in children including delayed cognition and social-emotional/behavioral development



# Cost Savings

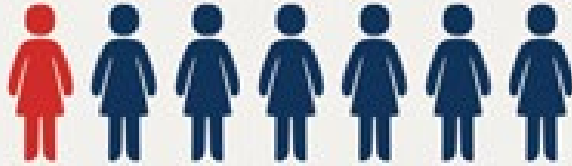
- The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that by 2024, about a quarter of postpartum beneficiaries will live in states that elect the new option and that extended Medicaid coverage will result in almost **\$6.1 billion in federal spending over the first ten years** and expected to grow over time
- The CBO estimates that not only are their federal and state cost savings, but this will **decrease ACA subsidy cost for private insurance**
- Savings from **averted severe maternal morbidity**: Medicaid-enrolled pregnant women with severe maternal morbidity cost an average of \$10,134 annually compared to \$6,894 for those without
- Savings from **prevention**: Preventing gaps in coverage ensures access to primary and preventive care, including management of chronic conditions and screening for mental health conditions, substance use, and intimate partner violence



# Mental Health

## Key takeaways

PMADs are the **#1 complication** of pregnancy and childbirth



Nationally, PMADs affect up to **1 in 7** pregnant and postpartum women

Untreated PMADs in the U.S. **are costly** and have multigenerational consequences



Half of **perinatal women** with a diagnosis of depression do not get the treatment they need



- **Drug/alcohol use or substance** use disorders were documented in 72% of Alaskan pregnancy-associated deaths reviewed by the MCDR Committee during 2016-2022
- Increasing access to screening and treatment for substance misuse during and after a pregnancy may reduce costs for the index child as well as subsequent pregnancies and births
- Alaska Medicaid paid **3.9 times** as much per infant for those affected by Neonatal withdrawal compared to nonaffected infants



# Alaska Supports HB 59

## Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage is supported by:

- The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG)
- The American Medical Association
- The American Academy of Pediatrics
- The Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
- The American College of Physicians
- The American Academy of Family Physicians
- The American Hospital Association
- The American Psychiatric Association
- The American College of Cardiology
- The American Osteopathic Association
- The March of Dimes
- The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- The American Heart Association







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# Healthy Families Initiative



# Healthy Families Initiative

**Strong families are the foundation of a healthy society and a vibrant economy.**

- 4-year statewide investments in the health and well-being of Alaskan families
- Governor Dunleavy proposed \$9.5M (UGF) in FY 24 operating budget for Healthy Families activities within DOH:
  - ✓ **Postpartum Medicaid extension**
  - ✓ Office of Health Savings
  - ✓ TB and congenital syphilis mitigation



# Sectional Analysis

HB 59: Postpartum Medicaid Extension



## Section 1

**Adds a new section (o) to AS 47.07.020, authorizing the department to implement an extension of postpartum Medicaid coverage up to the maximum period authorized under federal law.**



## Section 2

**Amends the uncodified law to add the requirement for submission of a Medicaid state plan amendment to allow Medicaid beneficiaries to receive postpartum coverage for up to 12 months.**





## Section 3

**Amends the uncodified law to establish the requirement that the commissioner of health notifies the revisor of statutes within 30 days of federal approval of the state plan amendment.**



## Section 4

**Establishes that the postpartum extension takes effect on the day after the date the commissioner notifies the revisor of statutes as described above.**



# Questions?

Courtney Enright

Department of Health

Special Assistant to the Commissioner / Legislative Liaison

[courtney.enright@alaska.gov](mailto:courtney.enright@alaska.gov)

(907) 269-7800

