



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



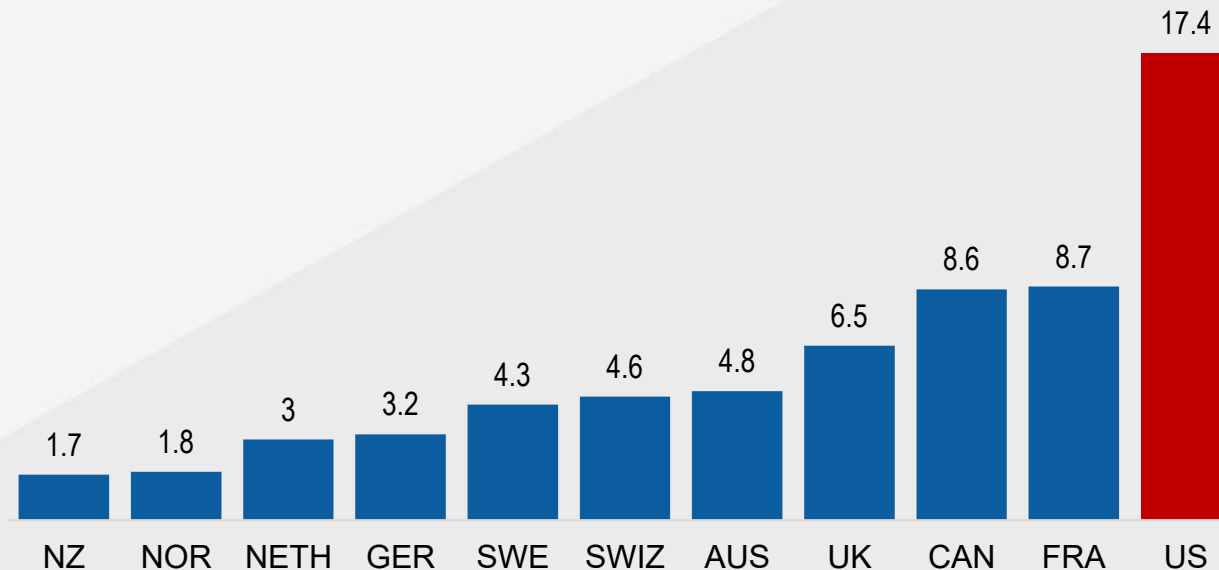
What is Postpartum Medicaid Extension?

- HB 59 extends postpartum Medicaid coverage for new mothers from 60 days to 12 months
- The original 60 days postpartum period for Medicaid came from Congress in 1986. The data are clear: postpartum health issues occur far beyond 60 days
- HB 59 is an evidence-based action that supports growing families and will improve maternal health outcomes for Alaskans
- Continued health care coverage is associated with detection and early intervention which improve long-term maternal and child health outcomes



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)**



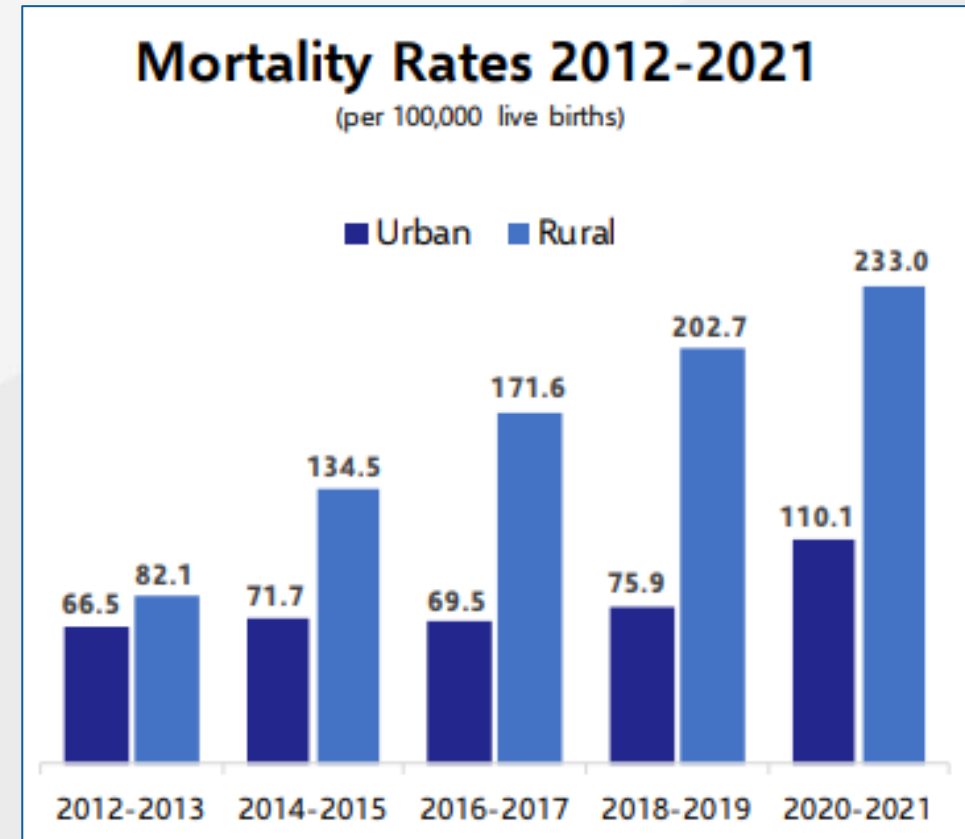
What Are the Stakes?

- 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

- **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



Cost Savings

- The costs for providing Medicaid coverage for new mothers who would have otherwise lost or experienced a gap in coverage have been estimated using historical Medicaid claims data, but these costs do not take into account **potential savings and offsetting factors**
- 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



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





Healthy Families Initiative

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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
 - ✓ Fresh Start Campaign



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

(907) 310-4296

