

More States Extend Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

Michelle Winokur, DrPH

The Alliance for Patient Access (allianceforpatientaccess.org), founded in 2006, is a national network of physicians dedicated to ensuring patient access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care. AfPA accomplishes this mission by recruiting, training and mobilizing policy-minded physicians to be effective advocates for patient access. AfPA is organized as a non-profit 501(c)(4) corporation and headed by an independent board of directors. Its physician leadership is supported by policy advocacy management and public affairs consultants. In 2012, AfPA established the Institute for Patient Access (IfPA), a related 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. In keeping with its mission to promote a better understanding of the benefits of the physician-patient relationship in the provision of quality healthcare, IfPA sponsors policy research and educational programming.



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Postpartum coverage for new moms who lived in these locales ended after 60 days.

All four extensions were approved under provisions from the [American Rescue Plan](#). The Biden administration proposed the

package to quicken the country’s economic recovery from COVID-19. The 2021 plan is most commonly known for its economic stimulus components, but it also made way for new health programs and expansions of others.

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Extended Eligibility and More Benefits

States that elect to lengthen new moms’ eligibility via the American Rescue Plan must provide them [full Medicaid benefits](#). This means new moms will also get health care services like inpatient hospital stays and doctor visits that are not directly related to their pregnancy or postpartum care covered.

Currently, states are permitted to offer a narrower set of benefits to those who qualify for Medicaid when they become pregnant. It is called “pregnancy Medicaid.” Coverage can be limited to only those services that relate directly to prenatal care, labor, and delivery.

Medicaid finances over 1.5 million births. That is about [42%](#) of all births in America.

More Extensions on the Way

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Twelve-month postpartum extensions exist in California, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Some of these extensions were provided

under the American Rescue Plan and others through an “1115 waiver,” which allows Medicaid programs to provide coverage that varies in duration, location, or scope from the federal rules.

Additional state extension requests are being reviewed. As many as [720,000 pregnant women and new moms](#) could be eligible for expanded coverage if all states adopted this option.

Advantages of Consistent Coverage

Extended Medicaid coverage will likely reduce “churn” for new moms who move between being insured and uninsured.

Data show that approximately one-third of women experience a coverage disruption between conception and postpartum. As expected, that can mean [gaps in care](#), increased emergency department use, and worse health outcomes.

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This content article was also published at [InstituteforPatientAccess.org](#)

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