Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

The Importance of Extending Postpartum Medicaid Coverage in 200 Words

Population Health Sciences

Date Posted:

Dec 15, 2020

Ensuring that new mothers have access to health insurance is an investment that can create a more equitable health care system and improve health outcomes for women and children. Maternal mortality, morbidity and untreated postpartum conditions have lasting effects on children. For example, maternal depression affects 1 in 8 women following the birth of a child, which if gone untreated can negatively impact a child's development and mental health.

Medicaid is the single largest payor for pregnancy-related services in the United States, covering more than 40% of births. And yet Medicaid's pregnancy eligibility, which includes an income threshold that is higher than that for non-pregnant adults seeking Medicaid, ends 60 days after birth—meaning that many women lose coverage in this critical period of need. As part of a coalition of advocates and stakeholders from across the Commonwealth, PolicyLab and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia signed a letter to U.S. Sens. Casey and Toomey asking for their support in extending Medicaid coverage to one year postpartum. Notably Pennsylvania's Secretary of Health Rachel Levine and Secretary of Human Services Teresa Miller also signed on.

Extending postpartum Medicaid coverage advances health equity. Maternal mortality and morbidity impact women of every background, but women of color are disproportionately affected. The incoming Biden Administration has signaled a clear commitment to health equity, and with a great deal of recent activity on maternal health in Congress, hopefully the time has come to ensure women and their children have the health care access they need in the child's first year of life.

Tyler DeRubio, MPA, is a former policy and strategy senior associate at PolicyLab.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategic Operations & Communications Director Lauren Walens.

Rebecka Rosenquist
Rebecka Rosenquist
MSc
Deputy Director of Policy & Strategy