



April 1, 2021

**STATEMENT URGING SUPPORT FOR
EXTENDING POSTPARTUM MEDICAID COVERAGE**

Florida is facing a maternal health crisis.

The undersigned organizations and individuals, representing health and social service providers, advocates, unions, and others, strongly urge the Florida Legislature to extend pregnancy Medicaid coverage to 12 months postpartum to address the state's high maternal mortality rate. Florida is facing a maternal health crisis. We believe the need for action is urgent.

Maternal and infant health outcomes for women in Florida are bleak. In fact, The March of Dimes gave Florida a D+ on its 2020 Report Card for maternal and infant health indicators. Florida ranks 47th of the 50 states for the percent of women aged 19-44 who are uninsured-- a full one-fifth of women. Accordingly, Florida ranked 49th for access to healthcare for women. Without the ability to access care, too many women head into pregnancy with uncontrolled health conditions and significant unaddressed risk factors that imperil outcomes.

Further, outcomes are characterized by stark racial disparities. In 2018, non-Hispanic Black women experienced pregnancy related mortality at a rate of 2.5 times that of non-Hispanic White women. Similarly, the rate of infant deaths is more than twice as high for Black babies as it is for White babies.

Improving maternal and infant health outcomes depends on consistent access to care. Consistent care before and between births allows for the control of chronic conditions that may impact pregnancy outcomes, and offers an opportunity to identify and modify environmental exposures and psychosocial risks that are associated with negative pregnancy outcomes.

As noted a dozen years ago in the American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, "A



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comprehensive preconception care program has the potential to benefit women who desire pregnancy by reducing risks, promoting healthy lifestyles, and increasing readiness for pregnancy. For women who do not desire pregnancy, a preconception care program can reduce personal health risks and the risk of an unwanted pregnancy.” This is why the Centers for Disease Control and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have urged that preconception care is a critical strategy in improving maternal and infant health.

Nearly half of all births in Florida are financed by Medicaid. This coverage is critical, providing access to care for those who would otherwise be without during this vital period. Women in rural areas in Florida are particularly reliant on Medicaid coverage during pregnancy.

Currently in Florida, a single pregnant woman who earns up to \$2,816 monthly, or \$33,792 annually is eligible for Medicaid coverage. Yet beyond the 60th day postpartum, she loses coverage unless her income is at or below a mere \$459 monthly, or \$5,508 annually for a new single mom and baby (32% of the Federal Poverty Level). For the overwhelming majority of women, then, pregnancy Medicaid coverage ends 60 days after the pregnancy ends, despite the fact that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define the postpartum period as extending one year after the end of pregnancy.

Extending Medicaid coverage through the first year postpartum is one of the best tools for improving maternal and infant health. Continuous care for a full twelve months postpartum will help women access mental health and substance use services during the critical postpartum period, as well as address chronic conditions. It will also improve access to needed family planning services, ensuring healthy intervals between pregnancies and reducing unintended pregnancies.

In addition to improving maternal and child health outcomes, extending Medicaid postpartum coverage will also reduce costs. Many of the women who lose Medicaid coverage postpartum re-enroll at a later time. Rather than leaving postpartum complications and chronic conditions untreated, timely interventions will avoid more expensive care later. It will also shift costs from programs paid for entirely by the state to Medicaid, where 60% of costs are paid by the federal government.

The need to take action is made all the more urgent by the twin economic and health crises of COVID-19. It is time for Florida to extend postpartum Medicaid and ensure a



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full year of continuous postpartum coverage. We urge you to take action now. Florida's moms and babies are depending on it.

Signed:

Organizations

1199SEIU UHWE Florida	Miramar, FL
4Generations Institute	Tallahassee, FL
Aisha N. Postpartum Depression Awareness Foundation	Orlando, FL
Allegany Franciscan Ministries	Palm Harbor, FL Lauderdale Lakes, FL
Broward Healthy Start Coalition	Tallahassee, FL
Capital Area Healthy Start Coalition	Miami, FL
Catalyst Miami	Gainesville, FL
Central Healthy Start Coalition	Tallahassee, FL
Children & Family Resource Center	West Palm Beach, FL
Community Health Center of West Palm Beach	Miami, FL
Community Justice Project	Tallahassee, FL
Disability Rights Florida	Jacksonville, FL
Faith In Public Life	Tallahassee, FL
First 1000 Days Florida	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Alliance Planned Parenthood Affiliates	
Florida Association of Healthy Start Coalitions, Inc.	Tallahassee, FL
Florida BH IMPACT	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics, Inc.	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Council of Nurse-Midwives	
Florida Head Start Association	Tallahassee, FL
Florida Health Justice Project	
Florida Policy Institute	Orlando, FL
Florida West Coast Breastfeeding Task Force	
H.A.N.D. Up Project	Tallahassee, FL



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Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc.	Greenacres, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties, Inc.	Bartow, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Jefferson, Madison & Taylor Counties	Greenville, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade	Miami, FL
	Fort Walton Beach, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties	Orlando, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Orange County	Saint Cloud
Healthy Start Coalition of Osceola County	Pinellas Park, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Pinellas	Gainesville, FL
Healthy Start of North Central Florida Coalition	Hollywood, FL
Hispanic Unity of Florida, Inc.	Safety Harbor, FL
Huddle in the Harbor	Jacksonville, FL
Jacksonville National Organization for Women	Miami, FL
Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice FL	Orlando, FL
Latino Leadership, Inc.	Gainesville, FL
League of Women Voters Florida	Clearwater, FL
League of Women Voters North Pinellas County	Tampa, FL
League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County	Cocoa, FL
League of Women Voters of the Space Coast	St. Petersburg, FL
League of Women Voters of the St. Petersburg Area	Sarasota, FL
League of Women Voters Sarasota	Verona, NY
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.	Jacksonville, FL
Lutheran Services FL	Miami, FL
Mammha, LLC	Pompano Beach, FL
March of Dimes	Miami, FL
Miami-Dade County, Mayor	Tallahassee, FL
National Association of Social Workers - Florida	Jacksonville, FL
Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, Inc.	Miami, FL
Office of New Americans of Miami-Dade	Okeechobee, FL
Okeechobee Healthy Start	



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Open Hands Midwifery	Miami, FL
Opportunity For All Floridians	Miami, FL
Progress Florida	St. Petersburg, FL
REACHUP, Inc.	Tampa, FL
Relatable Communications Group	Orlando, FL
South City Foundation	Tallahassee, FL
South Florida Zioness	Boca Raton, FL
Southern Birth Justice Network	Miami, FL
Sulzbacher Center	Jacksonville, FL
Tampa Bay Breastfeeding Task Force	Tampa, FL
TBA Fund, Inc.	Safety Harbor, FL
The Center for Health Equity, Inc	Tallahassee, FL
The Florida Maternal Mental Health Collaborative	Gainesville, FL
United Way of Broward County	Fort Lauderdale, FL
United Way of Miami-Dade	Miami, FL
University of Miami School of Medicine	Miami, FL
WellFlorida Council	Gainesville, FL
Whole Child Leon	Tallahassee, FL

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