



new hampshire
WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

To: Chair Birdsell and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 175, (relative to Medicaid coverage for mothers, or MOMnibus)

Date: February 8, 2023

Position: OUGHT TO PASS

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation invests in equality and opportunity for New Hampshire women and girls through research, education, advocacy and grantmaking.

New Hampshire moms deserve access to safe, healthy, and equitable maternal and postpartum care. Prenatal, postnatal and the year after birth are crucial times for physical and mental health care, and investment in care for Granite State families during this time period will save lives and dollars in uncompensated care and increase health among both mothers and their children. Therefore, the New Hampshire Women's Foundation respectfully encourages the Committee to recommend this bill Ought to Pass.

Postpartum is a Crucial Time for Women to Have Access to Health Care

New Hampshire has long recognized the importance of providing preventive, acute and birth care for pregnant women. But women and birthing people need access to postpartum care longer than two months, and need access to maternal health services that meet their needs. There is an increasing rate of maternal mortality in the US with disparities by race and ethnicity.¹ Access to care would reduce maternal mortality.² Low-income and uninsured women are less likely to be treated for maternal depression.³ Providing Medicaid 12 months postpartum would save lives and have meaningful impact on this population as well as their families and communities.

A 2019 CDC Review of 14 U.S. Maternal Mortality Review Committees⁴ over 10 years found:

- 66% of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable
- 24% of pregnancy-related deaths were 43–365 days postpartum
- 9% of pregnancy-related deaths had an underlying cause of mental health condition (15% for Non-Hispanic White Women)

¹ "Preventing Pregnancy-Related Deaths." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 20 Sept. 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/preventing-pregnancy-related-deaths.html>.

² Searing, Adam, et al. "Medicaid Expansion Fills Gaps in Maternal Health Coverage Leading to Healthier Mothers and Babies." *Center For Children and Families*, 17 June 2019, <https://bit.ly/2JPfa9N>.

³ Schmit, Stephanie, and Anitha Mohan. "Maternal Depression and Medicaid - Clasp." *Medicaid Changes Would Spell Trouble for Maternal Depression Screening, Treatment*, CLASP, Apr. 2017, <https://www.clasp.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-and-publications/publication-1/Maternal-Depression-and-Medicaid.pdf>.

⁴ Davis NL, Smoots AN, Goodman DA. *Pregnancy-Related Deaths: Data from 14 U.S. Maternal Mortality Review Committees, 2008-2017*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2019.

A 2018 MA academic journal article found:

- Of women who had overdoses in the year before delivery, relapse overdoses we were most likely to occur 7–12 months after delivery⁵

Maternal Health Care is a Wise Investment

Preventive care is much less expensive than emergency care. Low-income women who qualify for Medicaid during pregnancy may work in lower-wage jobs that do not offer health insurance at an affordable price, and they may not be able to afford marketplace insurance in addition to the new expenses of caring for an infant. When women face an emergency situation postpartum, and are uninsured, it leads to uncompensated emergency care at our community hospitals. In addition, when women are given access to preventive and supportive care during pregnancy and postpartum, they are less likely to have emergent health needs in the first place. The benefits of investing in women's maternal health care are felt by the entire health system of our communities.⁶

Conclusion

The MOMnibus bill provides crucial access to maternal health care and services that meet the real needs of New Hampshire women and mothers. These investments will lead to better health outcomes for women, mothers and families, and smarter investments for Granite State communities. We urge you to recommend this bill Ought to Pass.

⁵ Schiff DM, Nielsen T, Terplan M, Hood M, Bernson D, Diop H, Bharel M, Wilens TE, LaRochelle M, Walley AY, Land T. Fatal and Nonfatal Overdose Among Pregnant and Postpartum Women in Massachusetts. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2018 Aug;132(2):466-474. doi: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000002734. PMID: 29995730; PMCID: PMC6060005.

⁶ Haley, Jennifer, and Emily Johnston. "Closing Gaps in Maternal Health Coverage: Assessing the Potential of a Postpartum Medicaid/Chip Extension." *Closing Gaps in Maternal Health Coverage: Medicaid/CHIP Extension | Commonwealth Fund*, The Commonwealth Fund, 29 Jan. 2021, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/issue-briefs/2021/jan/closing-gaps-maternal-health-postpartum-medicaid-chip>.