

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND NEWBORNS FOR A HEALTHIER NEW MEXICO

Nothing changes your life like a brand-new baby, but one thing a new birth shouldn't change is whether or not you can get health insurance.

The Problem

New mothers in New Mexico are currently only eligible for **just 2 months** of postpartum Medicaid coverage. This, unfortunately, forces parents to find new health insurance **only 60 days** after giving birth, while caring for their newborns and managing their own postpartum health concerns.¹ Changing health insurance often results in gaps in coverage and delays in care that can lead to an increased use of emergency services and worse overall health outcomes.²



Losing postpartum Medicaid coverage is dangerous for parents and babies – especially in communities of color:

- The rates of maternal and infant mortality are **highest for people of color**.
- Infants born to mothers of color have higher mortality rates due, in part, to a lack of access to health care.³
- Black and Hispanic births are disproportionately covered through Medicaid, and Black and Hispanic mothers are **almost twice as likely** to be uninsured postpartum than are white mothers.⁴ Changing Medicaid to include 12 months of postpartum care could help advance health equity.

Without postpartum coverage, new parents can miss out on mental health care that supports healthy infant development.

- Perinatal depression affects **up to 1 in 4 pregnant people**, and estimates show that more than half of infants living in poverty are being raised by mothers suffering from some form of depression.⁵
- Untreated maternal postpartum depression is associated with **child abuse and developmental delays** in children.⁶



BY THE NUMBERS

- New Mexico's maternal mortality rate of **28 deaths per 100,000** live births is higher than the national average of 20 deaths.⁷
- Nationally, **one-third** of maternal deaths occur within the first year postpartum.⁸
- **60%** of maternal deaths are preventable.⁹
- In New Mexico, the maternal mortality rate is **four times higher** for Black mothers than the state average for all races.¹⁰
- Of all maternal deaths in New Mexico, **20%** are of Native American mothers even though Native Americans compose **11%** of the state population.¹¹
- **71%** of births in New Mexico are covered by Medicaid - the highest percentage in the country.¹² Because of this high coverage, extending postpartum Medicaid would have a large impact on the health of New Mexico mothers and infants.

THE SOLUTION

New Mexico lawmakers can prevent maternal deaths by extending Medicaid's postpartum coverage to a full year after birth. Extended coverage will allow mothers and newborns to get the services they need to stay healthy and thrive.

- Through the **American Rescue Plan Act**, states have the option of extending Medicaid postpartum coverage to 1 year. The Act gives states federal matching funds to offer the additional 10 months of full-benefit Medicaid coverage.¹³
- **26 states are taking action** to extend postpartum coverage, including Florida and Colorado, which have already appropriated state matching funds to implement an extension of postpartum Medicaid when it comes available April 1, 2022.¹⁴
- Expanding health care access for parents improves the health and other long-term outcomes for children.¹⁵
- By extending postpartum Medicaid, lawmakers will ensure that mothers and infants of color will be able to access the care they need, **reduce racial disparities** for maternal and infant health outcomes, and **create a more equitable health care coverage system** for all New Mexico families.¹⁶

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