

Missouri Lawmakers MUST Pass a Clean Postpartum Medicaid Extension Bill

OPPOSE: [Senate Substitute for Senate Committee Substitute for SB 45 & 90](#)

SUPPORT: As introduced, [HB 957](#) - Rep. Bosley, D-79 (St. Louis) | [HB 286](#) - Rep. Lewis, D-25 (Jackson) | [HB 965](#) - Rep. Stinnett, R-133 (Springfield) | [HB 354](#) - Rep. Davidson, R-130 (Greene) | [HB 254](#) - Rep. Politt, R-52 (Pettis)

If Missouri lawmakers do not pass a clean version of Medicaid postpartum extension legislation, federal Medicaid officials will deny its approval. Playing politics with this vital policy will leave thousands of postpartum Missourians facing dangerous gaps in coverage.

Overview

- Extending pregnancy-related Medicaid coverage from 60 days to the full-year postpartum is a lifesaving policy intervention to address the maternal health crisis.
- Legislative amendments that render postpartum extension ineligible for federal approval will leave an estimated 4,600 Missourians exposed to unsafe gaps in coverage during the at-risk postpartum period.
- **Missouri lawmakers must put people over politics and pass a clean postpartum extension bill.**

Background: State Pathways to Achieving One-Year Postpartum Coverage

Under federal statute, individuals enrolled in pregnancy-related Medicaid lose coverage 60 days after the end of pregnancy. To extend this coverage through the full one-year postpartum period, states must secure federal Medicaid approval using one of two pathways.

- **A State Plan Amendment (SPA)** is a streamlined pathway established under the American Rescue Plan Act – approval is guaranteed as long as states submit a clean proposal granting full postpartum coverage for 12 months after the end of pregnancy.^[1]
 - More than half the states, including Missouri neighbors Oklahoma, Kansas, Indiana, and Kentucky, have extended coverage using the full-coverage, expedited SPA pathway.
- **A Medicaid Section 1115 waiver** pathway requires a notice and waiver process through the federal Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) that is often burdensome and time-consuming.
 - While 1115 waivers allow states some flexibility, CMS will reject proposals that defy federal safeguards, restrict or limit access to care, or condition the receipt of care on requirements outside of the objectives of the Medicaid program.

Legislative “Poison Pills” Will Derail Missouri’s Bipartisan Postpartum Extension Efforts

If the Missouri legislature does not pass a clean postpartum extension bill, our state will forfeit federal Medicaid approval — and leave Missourians without coverage.

- A clean, full-coverage extension bill has had leadership and support from both sides of the aisle and a broad range of stakeholders in maternal and child health, patient advocacy, and the medical community in multiple committee hearings.

- Yet, anti-abortion senators hijacked this effort by adding amendment language to restrict access, defy the goals of the Medicaid program, and invite policing and surveillance of low-income Missourians' pregnancy outcomes.
- If successful, this political maneuvering will be at the expense of some of Missouri's most at-risk patients — it would be a “poison pill” that makes the legislation ineligible for both CMS pathways to approval.
- **Legislators still can — and must — pass a clean postpartum extension bill that ensures federal Medicaid approval, including HBs 286, 957, 965, 354, and 254.**

Missouri Legislators *Must* Put Patients First and Pass a Clean Postpartum Extension Bill
Extending Medicaid coverage to the full postpartum period — one year — is evidence-based, long overdue, and will protect and improve the health of thousands of Missouri families.

- Maternal mortality is rising, and many of these deaths from preventable causes such as overdose and suicide, occur after Medicaid coverage ends.
- Pregnancy-related complications may not surface until weeks after the end of pregnancy — one in three maternal deaths occur between one week and one year postpartum.^[2]
- Missouri's maternal mortality rate is substantially worse than the national average, and it is especially dire for Black women, who are three to four times more likely than white women to die within a year of pregnancy.^[3]
- The lack of continuous coverage in the postpartum period is widely recognized as one, among many, drivers of the maternal health crisis.^[4]
- Extending postpartum Medicaid ensures continuous coverage for the full postpartum period, prevents gaps in access to care, and is aligned with a growing body of evidence and recommendations from state maternal mortality review committees.
- This policy change **would provide lifesaving coverage to an estimated 4,600 Missourians currently at risk of coverage interruptions during the at-risk postpartum period.**

Missouri elected officials have an opportunity to pass a clean postpartum extension bill that will protect thousands of Missourians from unsafe coverage gaps, reduce preventable deaths, and address serious maternal health conditions. Playing politics by jeopardizing this vital, long-overdue policy with poison pill amendments will unconscionably put Missourians' health at risk.

[1] Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Dear State Health # 21-007, RE: Improving Maternal Health and Extending Postpartum Coverage in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) (December 2021), at <https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/sho21007.pdf>

[2] Gordon S, Sugar S, Chen L, Peters C, De Lew, N, and Sommers, BD. Medicaid After Pregnancy: State-Level Implications of Extending Postpartum Coverage. (Issue Brief No. HP-2021-28). Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. December 2021. Accessed at:

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/potential-state-level-effectsextending-postpartum-coverage>

[3] Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Annual Report, *A Multi Year Look At Maternal Mortality In Missouri, 2017-2019 Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review* (2022) at <https://health.mo.gov/data/pamr/pdf/2019-annual-report.pdf>

[4] Urban Institute. *Closing Postpartum Coverage Gaps and Improving Continuity and Affordability of Care through a Postpartum Medicaid/CHIP Extension* (January 2021) at: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/closing-postpartum-coverage-gaps-and-improving-continuity-and-affordability-care-through-postpartum-medicaidchip-extension>