

Elinor Lisa  
North Yarmouth

Dear Senator Sanborn, Representative Telper and the members of the joint standing committee on Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services.

My name is Elinor Lisa and I live in North Yarmouth Maine. I am writing today to ask you to support LD 1357, An Act To Require Private Insurance Coverage for Postpartum Care.

I delivered my daughter in August of 2017 at Maine Medical Center. My daughter was facing upwards a.k.a sunny side up when she was born. I did not use any medication during my birth. The contractions felt manageable and I had a great team to help me. But once the baby arrived I felt all the pain! I had suffered a third degree tear, was given an epidural and was in surgery for 2 hours to sew up my tear.

When we were released from the hospital my doctor advised me not to pick up my 20 month old son and that I should look into postpartum physical therapy after my tear had healed.

This is when I learned about my pelvic floor and it needed a lot of help. I had a c-section with my son so this was all new to me. For those of you who are not aware: The pelvic floor is the group of muscles that help to attach the pubis to the sacrum in the pelvis. This important network of muscles perform a variety of important tasks, such as supporting vital organs like the bladder and the intestines. In women, the pelvic floor has the additional responsibility of supporting the vagina.

When the pelvic floor is weak one will have incontinence, pressure (feels like something is falling out of your vagina) and pain. But you can heal if you get the right help. I was able to meet with an amazing pelvic floor rehabilitation physical therapist in Brunswick Maine. Not only did she help me heal my pelvic floor, she listened to me talk about the struggles I was having being a new mom of two kids. She helped me strengthen the muscles in my back and realign my pelvis time and time again.

I was very fortunate that a) I was not working at the time and had childcare to allow me to take care of myself, b) we had health insurance that covered this type of therapy and c) we were financially stable. However, the healing process was still a struggle. It was frustrating that my body was not healing quickly and, unbeknownst at the time, I was suffering from postpartum depression.

Women need to know that they deserve to take the time to heal from the injuries they can sustain during childbirth. One way to make this easier is to require private insurance to cover postpartum care. I believe all women should consult with a pelvic floor physical therapist after birth. There should be no women who sneeze or laugh and still have incontinence years after they give birth. If we normalize these postpartum issues and give women the resources to heal, we will all be better for it.