



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
130th Legislature

388 Broadturn Road
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Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Testifying in support of LD 265, “An Act To Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care”

February 24, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Senator Stacy Brenner and I represent Senate District 30, which includes Gorham, most of Scarborough and part of Buxton. Thank you so much for your time this afternoon. I am in front of you today to speak in support of LD 265, An Act To Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care.

I’ve had the honor of delivering hundreds of babies as a nurse-midwife, some are the children of your fellow legislators in 130th.

Being present at a birth was the highlight of my journey with a family, with a woman, as she became a mother, sometimes for the first time, some for the third. But what I enjoyed more than anything as a provider were the postpartum visits. These visits were opportunities to process the labor and birth, explore the new mother role, and set the trusting basis for ongoing well woman health care.

And, many times, it made the most sense to continue having visits to follow-up on a complication discovered during the pregnancy, like diabetes or perhaps postpartum depression that continued on well past 60 days.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has issued a statement urging the states and the federal government to increase coverage for the postpartum period from 60 days to 12 months. The rationale behind these statements are outlined extensively in the link provided at the bottom of my testimony.

What I’d rather tell you is the real story of women in that first 60 days, that first 12 months. I’m not sure how many of you are mothers, or perhaps fathers who remember that first 2 months, that first year. I have very vague memories personally, it was a blur. At some point during that time, we mothers learn to breastfeed, we have a crash course in infant development, we try to remember to take a shower and to eat.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Chair
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Between the lack of sleep, the pediatric visits, the immunization schedule and a plan for how to go back to work and afford childcare, the last thing a new mom is considering is herself. She has embarked on the phase of life which includes knowing selfless love, and for many this means their own health care comes last. Missing the postpartum follow up visit could mean a missed opportunity for a woman to connect with her nurse-midwife to set up long term follow up for high blood pressure, diabetes or a debilitating depression. Long term, this can have grave impacts on child development. A well cared for, healthy mother will parent better and arrive each day and night with more agency to care for her family. A woman who misses the opportunity to follow up in that first 2 months under our current model, may very well be lost to care. And these women, in Maine and across the country, are more often than not, Black, Indigenous, Tribal or Latina. Racial and ethnic disparities are magnified in maternal-child health care when women lack access to care.

I urge you to support women, children and families and vote ought to pass on LD 265. There is no greater measure for the health of a nation than its maternal morbidity and mortality rate, which is measured by the Federal CDC up to 12 months postpartum.

Thank you. And Be Well.

Additional information: www.acog.org/advocacy/policy-priorities/extend-postpartum-medicaid-coverage

