



Testimony of Rita Furlow, Senior Policy Analyst  
Maine Children's Alliance  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
LD 265  
An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care  
February 24, 2021

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Rita Furlow. I am the Senior Policy Analyst at the Maine Children's Alliance. I am here today in support of LD 265, *An Act to Provide Women Access to Affordable Postpartum Care*. The Maine Children's Alliance is a statewide non-partisan, non-profit research and advocacy organization whose mission is to promote sound public policies to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in Maine.

The postpartum period is a medically vulnerable period for many women. A 2020 report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that one quarter of all pregnancy related deaths of women occurred between 43 days and one year following child birth.<sup>1</sup> These deaths are highly preventable if women are receiving regular access to care. Providing high-quality care for mothers up to one year after birth can identify potential issues and ensure women are aware of the warning signs so they can connect to prompt follow-up care.

Assuring that women who are eligible for MaineCare during pregnancy and birth have continuous coverage postpartum would support improvements in infant and maternal outcomes. In addition to pregnancy related health conditions such as cardiovascular issues, women's mental health is also more vulnerable during the postpartum period. Regular health care visits can help physicians identify cases of postpartum depression that have significant impacts on women and their infants.

The Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission ([MACPAC](#)), an official advisory body to Congress, recently recommended that Congress extend the postpartum coverage period for individuals who were eligible and enrolled in Medicaid while pregnant to a full year of coverage, regardless of changes in income. They also recommended that this be matched at an enhanced 100% federal match rate.

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<sup>1</sup> N. L. Davis, a. N. Smoots, and D. a. Goodman, "pregnancy-Related Deaths: Data from 14 U.S. Maternal Mortality Review Committees, 2008-2017," Centers for Disease Control, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/maternal-mortality/erase-mm/mmr-data-brief.html#table2> (accessed October 20, 2020).

Healthy coverage for women before, during and after their pregnancy can help mothers have a healthy pregnancy and ensure their babies get off to a healthy start. Thank you for your consideration.

Also see [Medicaid and CHIP Coverage for Pregnant Women: Federal Requirements, State Options](https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Pregnancy-primary-v6.pdf) at <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Pregnancy-primary-v6.pdf>

See MACPAC *Considerations in Extending Postpartum Coverage* document here: <https://www.macpac.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Considerations-in-Extending-Postpartum-Coverage.pdf>