



**Texas Association of Health Plans**

1001 Congress Ave., Suite 300

Austin, Texas 78701

P: 512.476.2091

www.tahp.org

March 16, 2023

Dear Chairman Harless and Members of the Committee,

The Texas Association of Health Plans supports HB 12, which seeks to extend Medicaid coverage for postpartum moms in Texas. Presently, Texas offers Medicaid coverage to pregnant women only up to 60 days postpartum, but extending this coverage to 12 months is crucial to improving maternal and child health outcomes in the state.

Medicaid is the largest single payer of maternity care in Texas, covering 50% of all births. As a result, this program has a significant role to play in improving maternal health and reducing preventable maternal mortality. However, the short timeframe for Medicaid eligibility before and after pregnancy has been a major barrier preventing Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) from improving care for new mothers. Unfortunately, new [data](#) suggests that nearly 90% of Texas women whose pregnancies were covered by Medicaid found themselves uninsured at some point during the first year after delivery.

This loss of coverage during the postpartum period resulted in an increasing number of maternal deaths. Evidence suggests that [extending coverage](#) leads to better health outcomes and helps address disparities in maternal health, ensuring that all women have access to necessary care. Moreover, reducing severe health issues before they escalate can lead to lower health care costs in the long run.

The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency provided a unique opportunity to study the benefits of extending coverage for new moms. Parkland Community Health Plan, a Texas MCO, [studied](#) claims before and after implementing continuous eligibility and found that after the coverage extension, women used twice as many postpartum services, and two to ten times as many preventive, contraceptive, and mental/behavioral health services. The study also noted a significant reduction in pregnancies that occur within a short period of time after a previous pregnancy, which can have negative health consequences for both the mother and the baby.

Every Texan deserves access to affordable, comprehensive health care coverage—regardless of their income, health status, or pre-existing conditions. For women, coverage plays a critical role



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in making health care affordable and accessible. Women with health care coverage are more likely to obtain needed preventive, primary, and specialty care services and have better access to new advances in women's health. Providing full coverage for women on Medicaid a full 12 months post-delivery will improve maternal health and ensure healthier babies. Texas should join the majority of states and extend Medicaid postpartum coverage to a full year.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Lynch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Lynch  
Director of Policy & Medicaid Operations  
Texas Association of Health Plans