

March 5, 2021

Senator Melissa Wiklund
Minnesota Senate
95 University Ave West, Room 2227
St. Paul, MN 55155



Dear Sen. Wiklund:

The Minnesota Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) is writing in support of SF735 which would extend coverage for new mothers in the postpartum period from 60-days to one year.

ACOG is the premier professional physician membership organization dedicated to the improvement of women's health. As such, we support legislation to provide continuous, vital health coverage for women that aligns with their infants up to 365 days postpartum.

Given that the United States has the highest maternal mortality rate of any industrialized nation, this issue deserves the full attention of healthcare providers and policy makers. According to the CDC, approximately 30 percent of pregnancy-related deaths, not counting those that were caused by suicide or overdose, occur 43 to 365 days postpartum. Unfortunately, current Medicaid coverage for women who qualify for Medicaid solely based on the pregnancy, only insures new mothers for 60-days. This creates a gap in coverage that can have significant negative health outcomes for postpartum women.

Federal statute already covers a baby born to a mother on Medicaid through the first year of life. That baby's mother needs the same level of access to care. Closing the critical gap in coverage during this vulnerable time can mean the difference between life and death for some women. New data shows that clinical risk extends to the full year after the end of pregnancy for various conditions:

- Women with substance use disorder are more likely to experience relapse and overdose 7-12 months postpartum;
- One in seven women experience symptoms of postpartum depression in the year after giving birth;
- Cardiac disease, the leading cause of maternal mortality in the U.S. according to CDC data, is particularly prominent in the late postpartum period up to one year after the end of pregnancy.

Extending coverage aligns with the recommendations of the Minnesota Maternal Mortality Review (MMRC) Committee (and more than a dozen other state MMRCs) – this report was sent to the committee administrator. It also would align the mothers' coverage redetermination with that of the infant born on Medicaid and could save on administrative work.

Again, ACOG enthusiastically supports expanded expanding Medicaid to 12-months postpartum. We thank you for authoring this important legislation to protect the health of new mothers. If you have any questions, please reach out to our contract lobbyist, Tara Erickson, at Tara@tgeconsultingmn.com or 612-280-8998.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to continuing this discussion.

Sincerely,

Siri Fiebiger, MD, MPH, FACOG
Legislative Chair, ACOG MN Section