

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Helps introduce bill to enhance maternal health coverage under Medicaid, improve health outcomes for new moms

Posted on Wednesday, Sep 26, 2018

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New reform aims to reverse rising maternal mortality rates, close disparities that put women of color at risk

WASHINGTON, D.C – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and Kamala Harris (D-CA) in introducing new legislation to reduce the United States' rising maternal mortality rates, improve maternal and infant health outcomes, and close the disparities that continue to put mothers and children of color at risk.

The bill, the [Maximizing Outcomes for Moms through Medicaid Improvement and Enhancement of Services \(MOMMIES\) Act](#), would enhance coverage for pregnant women covered by Medicaid—which covers nearly half of all births in the United States— by extending coverage for many women to a full year after childbirth, increasing access to primary care providers and women's health providers, establishing a maternity care home demonstration project, and taking action to expand access to doula care.

“Wisconsin is seeing troubling increases in maternal and infant mortality, so we need to do everything we can to make sure women and families have access to quality, affordable health care,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “We know that healthier

pregnancies lead to healthier babies. That's why I'm proud to work on this important legislation by enhancing Medicaid and CHIP support so mothers and pregnant women can get the care they need at a price they can afford."

Between 2000 and 2014 the maternal mortality rate in the United States has increased by 26 percent, while it has decreased in other developed countries. Stark disparities in maternal deaths exist, further exacerbating the problem, as black women are nearly four times as likely to die from childbirth complications as white women. Furthermore, for every woman who dies due to a pregnancy-related complication, dozens more suffer from severe maternal morbidity.

Specifically, the *MOMMIES Act* would improve maternal health outcomes by:

- Extending Medicaid coverage for postpartum women to a full year after giving birth, rather than the current limit of 60 days that many women face;
- Ensuring that all pregnant and postpartum women have full Medicaid coverage, rather than coverage that can be limited to pregnancy-related services;
- Establishing a maternity care home demonstration project to study this innovative model of care in several states;
- Extending the Affordable Care Act's primary care bump to ensure that Medicaid beneficiaries have access to primary care providers, including women's health providers;
- Encouraging increased access to doula care to provide pregnant women on Medicaid with emotional, physical, and informational support; and
- Studying telemedicine and its effectiveness and potential to improve Medicaid beneficiaries' access to maternity care.

The *MOMMIES Act* has been endorsed by the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, Black Mamas Matter Alliance, Black Women's Health Imperative, Center for Reproductive Rights, Every Mother Counts, In Our Own Voice, March of Dimes, MomsRising, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, National Health Law Program, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, National Partnership for Women & Families and National Women's Law Center.