

Rep. Stubbs: Celebrates the passage of postpartum Medicaid expansion

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MADISON, WI – Today, the Wisconsin State Assembly voted to pass Assembly Bill 97/Senate Bill 23—relating to: extension of eligibility under the Medical Assistance program for postpartum women. Representative Shelia Stubbs (D-Madison) released the following statement:

“Today, the Wisconsin State Assembly voted to pass Assembly Bill 97/Senate Bill 23, which would expand lifesaving access to Medicaid coverage for postpartum women from 2 months to 12 months.

When we began our legislative session this morning, Wisconsin was one of only two states in our nation that had not yet expanded Medicaid coverage to include the first full year after a woman gives birth. Today, with an almost unanimous vote in the Assembly, we were able to change that.

Affordable, quality health care and early intervention can be the difference between life and death for so many Wisconsinites in the critical year after giving birth, when complications like hypertension, blood clots, hemorrhaging, sepsis, seizures, and poor mental health pose existential risks to the health of a new mother.

Care is key, but many new mothers in our state cannot afford it. By expanding postpartum Medicaid coverage, we will guarantee that new mothers can access the services needed to keep themselves and their children healthy.

Without a healthy mother, you can't have a healthy child. Without a healthy child, you can't have a healthy community.

In the words of Former Wisconsin First Lady Sue Ann Thompson, ‘It all begins with a healthy woman.’

As a State Representative and Former Dane County Supervisor for 16 years, I have been sounding the alarm about our state's pressing racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality in morbidity.

In Wisconsin, Black mothers are 5x more likely than white mothers to die from pregnancy or childbirth, and Black babies are 3x more likely than white babies to die before their first birthday. Let me be clear: Wisconsin is the worst state for racial disparities in infant mortality. These urgent disparities are unacceptable and must receive the attention that they deserve.

To address these pressing disparities, I collaborated with doulas and birthworkers across Wisconsin to introduce the Birth Equity Act, a package of bills specifically created to promote better health outcomes for moms and babies across our state.

Better, more affordable, more accessible health care for new mothers is something we should all be able to support, and we have been given the opportunity to do so today.

During one of the most medically vulnerable times in their lives, Wisconsin women deserve access to care. They have asked their Legislature to improve their access to that care. In fact, my constituents and women across Wisconsin have demanded that we improve their access to lifesaving postpartum care.

Today, I am proud to say that we heard their call to action and passed a bill that will save countless lives throughout Wisconsin.

In the words of Former First Lady Michelle Obama, "Communities and countries and ultimately the world are only as strong as the health of their women."