

# Wisconsin Catholic Conference: Celebrates postpartum expansion

Posted on Thursday, Feb 19, 2026

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The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice of the state's Catholic bishops, celebrates the passage of Senate Bill 23, which extends critical medical assistance to women from 60 days to a full year after giving birth. The bill will now be sent to Governor Evers for his signature.

As Catholics, we believe every public policy should be measured by how it affects the life and dignity of the human person, especially prioritizing the needs of those living in poverty, those who are on the margins, and those who suffer the injustice of racism. Catholic teaching holds that every member of the human family must be respected from conception until natural death and have the opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the life of the community.

This is why the WCC has strongly supported extending postpartum coverage for new mothers, embracing both the well-being of women and their children. This critical vote means a woman will not lose her health insurance and primary care provider at a time when her steady access to healthcare is essential, and while she is rearranging her life around the care of her newborn.

In the time after giving birth, women can suffer from serious conditions like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, depression, and substance use disorders. Life-threatening complications frequently arise months after giving birth, far beyond the current 60 days of coverage. In fact, 75 percent of pregnancy-associated maternal deaths in Wisconsin occur postpartum. Postpartum coverage is especially critical for women of color, who still face disproportionate maternal mortality rates in our state.

The WCC is deeply grateful to the bill's authors, Senator Jesse James and

Representative Patrick Snyder, the many lawmakers and advocates who supported this bill through the years, and Assembly and Senate leadership for accomplishing this bipartisan success.

Associate Director Tia Izzia stated, “If Wisconsin mothers thrive, Wisconsin children thrive too. This extension will be life-changing for our most vulnerable families and a commonsense investment in the future of Wisconsin. Today, Wisconsin has truly embraced them both.”