
SENATE BILL 6128

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2020 Regular Session

By Senator Randall

Prefiled 01/02/20.

1 AN ACT Relating to improving maternal health outcomes by
2 extending coverage during the postpartum period; adding a new section
3 to chapter 74.09 RCW; and creating new sections.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) In Washington and across the country,
6 maternal mortality rates continue to be unacceptably high.
7 Approximately seven hundred people die each year in the United States
8 due to pregnancy-related conditions. The majority of these deaths are
9 preventable.

10 (2) Maternal mortality data reveal significant racial and ethnic
11 disparities. In this state, American Indian and Alaska native women
12 are six to seven times as likely to die from a pregnancy-related
13 cause than white women.

14 (3) The centers for disease control and prevention define the
15 postpartum period as extending one year after the end of pregnancy,
16 and data show that health needs continue during that entire year. In
17 Washington, nearly one-third of all pregnancy-related deaths and the
18 majority of suicides and accidental overdoses occurred between forty-
19 three and three hundred sixty-five days postpartum.

20 (4) The maternal mortality review panel has identified access to
21 health care services and gaps in continuity of care, especially

1 during the postpartum period, as factors that contribute to
2 preventable pregnancy-related deaths. In their October 2019 report to
3 the legislature, the panel recommended ensuring funding and access to
4 postpartum care and support through the first year after pregnancy.

5 (5) Postpartum medicaid coverage currently ends sixty days after
6 pregnancy, creating an unsafe gap in coverage. Continuity of care is
7 critical during this vulnerable time, and uninterrupted health
8 insurance provides birthing parents with access to stable and
9 consistent care. Extending medicaid coverage through the first year
10 postpartum is one of the best tools for increasing access to care and
11 improving maternal and infant health.

12 (6) The legislature therefore intends to extend medicaid coverage
13 from sixty days to twelve months postpartum.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 74.09
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) Beginning January 1, 2021, the authority shall provide
17 medical assistance to postpartum persons who reside in Washington
18 state, have countable income equal to or below one hundred ninety-
19 three percent of the federal poverty level, and are not otherwise
20 eligible under Title XIX of the federal social security act. Medical
21 assistance under this section must be provided during the twelve-
22 month period beginning on the last day of the pregnancy. To ensure
23 continuity of care and maximize the efficiency of the program, the
24 amount and scope of health care services provided to individuals
25 under this section must be the same as that provided to pregnant and
26 postpartum persons under medical assistance, as defined in RCW
27 74.09.520.

28 (2) In administering this program, the authority shall seek any
29 available federal financial participation under the medical
30 assistance program, as codified at Title XIX of the federal social
31 security act, the state children's health insurance program, as
32 codified at Title XXI of the federal social security act, and any
33 other federal funding sources that are now available or may become
34 available in the future.

35 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The health care authority shall submit a
36 waiver request to the federal centers for medicare and medicaid
37 services to allow for the state to receive federal match for the
38 coverage of postpartum persons identified in section 2 of this act.

1 The authority shall provide coverage to all eligible postpartum
2 persons identified under section 2 of this act regardless of federal
3 approval of the waiver request. The authority shall report to the
4 legislature on the status of the waiver request by December 1, 2020,
5 and inform the legislature of any statutory changes necessary to
6 allow the state to receive federal match for the coverage of
7 postpartum persons identified in section 2 of this act.

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